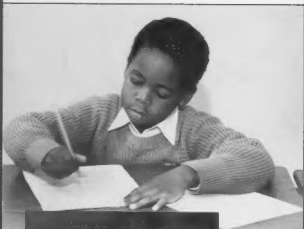


Blacks in New Jersey

1987 Report

Crisis in Urban Education



Photos by Don Farkas

Crisis in Urban Education

**Blacks in New Jersey
1987 Report**

Crisis in Urban Education

**Eighth Annual Report of the
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute**

New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute

The New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute (NJPPRI), established in 1978, is a volunteer, non-profit, tax exempt organization. NJPPRI is concerned with identifying, analyzing and promulgating public policy issues significantly affecting the Black residents of New Jersey. The organization seeks to present these issues for appropriate public discussion and, thereby, to contribute to the development of strategies that address these issues in ways beneficial to New Jersey's Black population.

NJPPRI is statewide in focus and attempts to work cooperatively with public policy oriented individuals and organizations throughout New Jersey.

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Published by:
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute (NJPPRI)
P.O. Box 833
Absecon, New Jersey 08201

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Printed in U.S.A.

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Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the Black United Fund of New Jersey ("BUFNJ") and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey ("UMDNJ") for their generous support in the production of this document.

BUFNJ's contribution represents a continuing relationship between that organization and NJPPRI that is intended to combine the identification and analysis of problems of critical importance to the black residents of New Jersey with a funding plan designed to provide solutions to those problems.

UMDNJ's contribution represents evidence of the fact that the University concurs with NJPPRI's belief that the Blacks in New Jersey Report contributes in a constructive way to the discussion of important issues of public policy in this state.

The basis for support from these notable organizations is set forth in their own words in the letters that follow.

NJPPRI Board of Directors



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March, 1988

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) is pleased to have supported the publication of this 8th Annual Report of the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute.

Black Americans have a life expectancy that is five years less than whites, and infant mortality rates that are twice that of whites despite a steady decrease in overall infant deaths during the last few decades. Excess illness and death among minorities can be partly attributed to fewer resources to access health care---a condition that is intensified by the scarcity of black and hispanic physicians and other health care professionals. Nationwide, not enough minority students are receiving the preparation, encouragement, and resources needed to enter the medical professions. Indeed, greater proportions of minority high school graduates are not going to college. Critical shortages of black and hispanic physicians and dentists, and the lack of health care in many minority communities will not be solved until more progress is made to prepare minority students to appreciate science and mathematics which will lead them toward college and medical careers.

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is pleased to be at the forefront of these efforts. Today, nearly 200 junior and senior high school students from Newark and Camden participate in UMDNJ pre-college programs. At the undergraduate level, pre-med minority students participate in UMDNJ summer enrichment programs, and other UMDNJ outreach efforts seek to interest minority college students to pursue health science careers.

This publication represents an important resource for educators, policy makers, and citizens who are seeking new ideas, programs, and partnership arrangements that can release the tremendous potential of our urban schools and minority students.

More can---and must be done to make education relevant, and attainable for urban and minority students. We applaud the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute for its leadership on this time---critical issue.

Sincerely,

Stanley S. Bergen, Jr., M.D.
President

George Hampton
Vice President for Urban and
Community Affairs

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I salute the authors and members of the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute for researching and compiling comprehensive papers on education in the State of New Jersey.

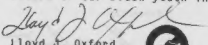
The educational process in this country and specifically urban cities of New Jersey require systemic change in order to help our black youth to fulfill their potential. We can no longer allow our children to be processed for failure. Parents, academicians, elected school officials and concerned black community must come together and start training our children for success within our public school system especially in our urban centers.

Achieving educational excellence is not only the very essence of survival of our black youth but it also represents an essential investment in the future viability of New Jersey.

In order to achieve educational parity, we must see that urban school districts are funded at adequate levels and demand a standard of excellence not only from our students but also from the institutions that are entrusted with their care.

On the occasion of the publication of the 8th Annual "Blacks in New Jersey Report" and as the intent of these papers is to inform and stimulate, I invite all, including Black United Fund of New Jersey's grantees, grass root community-based organizations which provide educational and tutorial programs, school districts, faculty and concerned segments of our urban centers statewide to carefully review and examine the papers presented and design comprehensive programs/projects that will ultimately enhance educational excellence in the State of New Jersey.

The Black United Fund of New Jersey, Inc. (BUF/NJ) is committed to providing financial assistance to worthy and eligible community based organizations whose goal is to implement creative strategies and public policy agenda in the interest of educational opportunities for the benefit of the future of our black youth in the State of New Jersey.


Lloyd J. Oxford
President & CEO



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Introduction

On October 10, 1987 the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute (NJPPRI) convened a symposium on the crisis in urban education. The Institute initiated the dialogue by setting forth two suppositions:

1. that the quality of education provided to pupils in many of New Jersey's urban school districts is poor enough to describe those districts as being in crisis; and
2. that the brunt of these crises is being borne by Black and Hispanic youth.

Supposition quickly gave way to postulation when the symposium reviewed data involving urban school dropout rates, standardized test results, urban unemployment rates, the physical condition of the state's urban school facilities, levels and rate of Black and Hispanic enrollment in institutions of higher education, the proportional rate of transfer of Black pupils into so-called "special education" classrooms and per pupil expenditures in urban districts as compared to non-urban districts.

The assumptions were strengthened when the body established that as of 1985 68.6 percent of all Black students in New Jersey public schools attended schools classified by the Department of Education as district factor group A or B, those representing student bodies with the lowest socioeconomic status.

The symposium found additional bases to support the correctness of its hypotheses in a review of the radical nature of responses from the various elements of the urban education system: state government favors state takeover of troubled schools; private and parochial schools are flourishing; independent schools established primarily for the education of Blacks and Hispanics are on the rise; urban parents have sued the state challenging the adequacy of the state's response to a constitutional mandate to provide every school aged child with a "thorough and efficient" education; and urban schools are beset with problems associated with frustrated, disillusioned and presumably angry students.

It is on this last indicia of an urban education crisis—the mood and attitude of urban youth—that the symposium paused to reflect on the question of whether the problems in urban schools are unique to the educational system or whether urban schools are a microcosm of the broader ills of the communities in which they are located. The symposium considered the fact that urban schools are situated in the state's

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editor

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oldest and poorest communities—poor in terms of the levels of financial resources available to deliver essential services to residents, including modern school facilities with adequate space, technical equipment and personnel to meet today's education demands. The body considered the crossing currents of inadequate housing and health care as well as limited employment opportunities in these distressed areas and considered whether any responses to a crisis in urban education can be effective if exercised only in the limited arena of the education system.

The symposium resolved to pursue these questions beyond the limits of a day's discussion by assigning to its participants selected issues for further research, analysis and composition. What follows in this Eighth Annual Report of the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute is a compilation of that ambitious effort.

Crisis in Black Education: Some Definitional and Statistical Issues

A crisis exists in American education. A crisis of immense proportions exists with respect to the education of blacks in this country. Although we hear discussions regarding the education system in this country, especially as it relates to the education of urban youth, these statements and others similar to them no longer warrant front page headlines because their ability to raise more than an eyebrow has diminished significantly. This simply isn't news anymore but the problems continue. Commissions and task forces are appointed to study the various aspects of this multi faceted problem. Summits are convened to discuss related issues. Newspapers present reports and editorials on literacy, the drop-out rate, bilingual education, the need for remediation in colleges, declining enrollments in institutions of higher education and plans to address one or all of these issues.

The opening statements of this article may or may not be accurate. Whether or not a crisis exists in the American educational system and more specifically the educational system as it relates to Black Americans necessitates an investigation into the purposes of education and a comparison of these purposes with the results. The purpose of this article is to establish a framework within which you, the reader, can examine the issues and determine if indeed a crisis exists particularly in the education of blacks in New Jersey and if so, to what extent and, finally, what you as a responsible citizen should do. It is not the intention of this author to lead you to any particular conclusion, it is however the intention of the author to present some statistical data and some definitions which should assist you in drawing your own conclusions.

To begin, it is important to state that although the focus of this article is on education, education cannot be viewed in a vacuum; it must be studied in relation to the political, economic and social forces which are operating at any given point in time. Thus, the reader is asked to keep in mind the political, economic and social forces which are prevalent today or at other times cited during the course of this article. In addition, it is important to note that black interest and participation in education did not commence in the United States. In fact, this interest in education predates the so-called "discovery" of America. Pre-colonial Africans placed a strong emphasis on education¹. Education took place first at the mother's bosom and in the family unit and then branched out to the elders in the community. In Asante, Hausaland, Benin, Congo and elsewhere on the African continent prospective artisans labored for months, even years, under master craftsman before gaining admission to an occupational guild.² During the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century education flourished in the

Alma M. Joseph

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cities of Timbuktu, Jenne and Gao. In fact, Timbuktu's schools of theology and jurisprudence became widely known and respected throughout the Muslim world. Thus it is evident that the black man, who was excluded from educational institutions in this country on the basis that he was incapable of learning anything but the simplest tasks, has a history of placing a high value on learning and has participated in varied and sophisticated educational settings.

Now that we have established that education is not an invention of western society and something which is beyond the reach of blacks, it is time to raise the first issue—what is education. In the brief history of black involvement in education prior to the enslavement of blacks in this country, three distinct educational methods were cited. First, education was depicted as the transmission of culture which occurs prior to any contact with the world outside of one's home. This transmission of values from parents to children was immediately followed by the reinforcement of those cultural values by the members of one's community. Although the technological advances of our society have heightened the impact of contact with the world outside of one's home, the period of time prior to formal schooling is still a very important learning period for children. Second, education can be viewed as the training which one receives in order to prepare for a particular occupation, in the past this training did not occur in a formal school setting although the students were required to master certain competencies. Finally, education can be viewed as the preparation for certain professions. The training for these professions traditionally occurred in institutions of higher learning.

We are, however, in a new era and definitions which applied to educational activities in the sixteenth century may not be applicable today. In fact, an industrialized society is characterized as being advanced to the extent that skills at all levels of the occupational hierarchy are increasingly acquired through formal educational institutions. Thus, the carpenter, plumber and welder of today are more likely to have learned their trades at a community college than from the local experts in those fields. According to Fred Pincus (1980), this trend toward utilizing formal education where on-the-job training could suffice is based not on need or some belief that preparation through formal education is better but on the desire to increase profits by reducing the labor costs by hiring those who are already trained.⁸

America adopted the functionalist approach to education as espoused by Emile Durkheim. Education from this standpoint is viewed as having as its special task "the methodical socialization of the young generation."

By this Durkheim meant the development in the child of certain values and certain intellectual and physical skills "which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined."⁹ This view of education has serious ramifications for the black child in our society. If the society views the black child as incapable of intellectual achievements, as the athlete but not the physicist, then the system of public education in which the black child finds himself will foster and perpetuate educational inequality.

Rather than focusing on the theories of education espoused by the majority culture, the views of some noted black educators will be reviewed. It is acknowledged that their views may at times be similar or identical with those of the majority culture at the time espoused but they too were products of their environments as are we.

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1857 and experienced the transition from slavery to freeman during reconstruction to the post reconstruction era. Washington was educated at Hampton Institute in Virginia and then spent a year at Wayland Seminary in Washington reading law. During his time at Wayland, his views regarding the necessity of a utilitarian education were strengthened.

Washington believed that blacks should strive for an industrial education, i.e., one that would prepare them to work in the field of agriculture. He spoke critically of those blacks who knew how to speak Latin but did not know how to make a living.

"To Washington, Tuskegee was not only a place for vocational or academic education, but a place where young Blacks could acquire the other aspects of total education which would enable them to lead a better and more complete life. . . Washington was concerned with all facets of youths' development, particularly those facets which would lead to marketable skills. . ."⁶

Benjamin Elijah Mays was born in 1895, a year which can be viewed as the end of the era of reconstruction. The political gains which had been made during reconstruction were reversed and, for economic reasons, the education of blacks was seen as a bad idea. As an adult, Mays, who was educated at Bates College in New England and the University of Chicago, developed his conception of the threefold purpose of education. According to Mays, education is designed to 1 train the mind to think clearly, logically and constructively, 2 train the heart to understand and sympathize with the aspirations, the sufferings and injustices of mankind; and 3 strengthen the will to act in the interest of the common good.⁴

"Education should be sought for its own sake. This means that it should be sought for the enrichment of life, for the sheer enjoyment of knowing how to distinguish between truth and error, between good and evil, and between that which is first rate and that which is second rate. . . The trained mind develops leadership, enabling a leader to deal with others from a position of strength rather than weakness. Education is not for the purpose of lifting one above one's fellows but to enable one to help one's fellows. Following this aim, one learns that he cannot fulfill his destiny unless he uses his knowledge not only to benefit himself but to benefit others. . . ."⁷

WEB DuBois was born in 1868. He graduated from Fisk University in 1888 and was the first black to receive a Ph D. from Harvard University in 1896. His views of education were often contrasted with those of Booker T. Washington and in fact considered part of the Great Debate of their time. DuBois regarded college as the true

Differing Views of Education

foundings stone of education not kindergarten as some would have it.⁸ DuBois saw education as partisan and—given the realities of the social order—fundamentally subversive.⁹ DuBois saw education as a process of the teaching of certain values: moderation, an avoidance of luxury, a concern for courtesy, a capacity to endure, a nurturing of love for beauty. This he considered a life long process. For him, the object of education was not to make men carpenters but to make carpenters men.¹⁰ Instead of the strict vocationalism espoused by Washington, DuBois felt that vocational guidance should foster the training of men who could think clearly, who would have knowledge of what human life on earth had been and what it was and enable them to take an intelligent part in the production of goods. In order to accomplish this, DuBois espoused the higher education of the Talented Tenth, that is, those blacks who were intellectually gifted as demonstrated by very careful testing.

Nathan Wright was born in 1923. He received his bachelor's degree from Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts and his doctorate in education from Harvard. Education according to Wright should create self-awareness and role identification and should encourage self-directed growth which will lead to self-sufficiency. For him, education must be for living. That is, education should be considered as part of life, not as a separate entity.

Wright focused on the effect of self-image and learning. For Wright, much of education is too far removed from the world as the black child experiences it. The system of education rather than foster positive self-awareness in black children has encouraged black children to indulge in self-hatred and denial of any and all positive aspects of black life.¹¹

The preceding brief discussion of the purposes of education was not meant to be all inclusive but rather to give an overview of thoughts which are still discussed today. The debate regarding liberal vs. vocational education still evokes heated arguments in academia, but for black youth the question is often a doubled edged sword. Whereas the question for white youth is generally which program will prepare him for the current labor market and the jobs which are awaiting him; the question for the minority youth is often which program shall we place him in so that the system will maintain its status quo. Social stratification is the outcome of the educational system in this country and the inflationary spiral of education requirements was designed to maintain the balance of "power." Increased educational requirements have always been used to protect the labor market from a flood of applicants when jobs were scarce. However, in a system where a particular group is less likely to attain the additional requirements, the increased requirements have the effect of keeping that group out of certain segments of the labor market.

With this background information and these definitions in mind, the specifics of the education of blacks in New Jersey follow for your consideration.

New Jersey and the Education of Blacks

Black residents accounted for 12.5 percent of the New Jersey population in 1982. More than 32.6 percent of these residents are characterized as poor.¹² 65.5 percent of the state's black population which met the criteria for categorization as poor reside in seven cities—Camden, East Orange, Irvington, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Trenton.¹³ Although poverty in and of itself cannot be viewed as the cause of educational failure (regardless of how education is defined), it is important to recognize that a system which is built on a district's tax base will favor the "haves" and disadvantage the "have nots." In fact, even with equalization/minimum aid the wealthiest districts raise approximately \$1,300 more per pupil with a substantially lower school tax rate.¹⁴ Equally important are the possible implications of the fact that 34 percent of the black children living in New Jersey in 1980 were living in poverty.¹⁵ Poverty, poor housing, poor nutrition and other conditions which are the extension of poverty affect children in a manner which is likely to depress their educational performance. It is important to note, however, that a 1964 study found that "educational deprivation is not mainly the effect of poverty, parental attitude and maternal care are more important than the level of material needs."¹⁶ Yet millions of dollars were expended on programs aimed at ensuring that children from poor families received the nutrition necessary to function in a classroom setting.

Without a great deal of information, which is unavailable, the success or failure of the nutrition programs cannot be determined, but it can be assumed that researchers felt that there was a significant correlation between nutrition and ability to function in a classroom setting. There is no doubt that parental attitude and maternal care are significant factors in the education of children; however, if parents are concerned with the lowest level of needs according to Maslow's hierarchy, that of food, clothing, shelter and safety, their attention cannot be focused on what could be considered luxury items, that is, improving a child's reading level.

Table 1 shows the percentage of students who failed standardized tests in selected districts.

If we look at Table 2, which shows the equalized property valuation, which is the value of taxable property in a school district adjusted to reflect 100 percent of market value, and the current expenditures per student for the above cited districts, an interpretation could be made that the haves do well and the have nots do poorly.

A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 probably will not surprise any reader of this document. It is expected and accepted by educators and policy makers alike that children from affluent districts will perform better on standardized examinations than children from the so-called disadvantaged districts (of course, there are always exceptions). Thus other questions arise. What are the tests measuring?

Should blacks be alarmed and/or concerned when their children do poorly on these tests? If so, why? If not, why not? In responding to these questions, we are drawn back to our definition of education. I daresay that few are true believers in the concept of education being

Table 1 *Percentage of Students Failing Standardized Tests in Selected Districts*

District	% Failing 3rd Grade Reading Test 1984-1985	% Failing 6th Grade Math Test 1984-1985
Camden	19.4	38.9
East Orange	14.0	21.2
Irrington	5.7	2.6
Jersey City	39.1	44.6
Newark	16.9	30.0
Paterson	16.9	19.4
Trenton	32.5	20.4
Cherry Hill	1.0	2.4
Lawrence	3.0	6.8
Livingston	2.7	5.3
Millburn	3.2	2.6
Princeton	11.1?	10.2
So. Orange/Mplwd.	0.3	5.4
Woodbridge	1.8	2.7
	% Failing 6th Grade Reading Test 1984-1985	% Failing 6th Grade Math Test 1984-1985
Camden	35.0	37.6
East Orange	31.7	27.6
Irrington	10.3	4.4
Jersey City	43.4	46.5
Newark	32.2	19.1
Paterson	27.3	21.1
Trenton	27.9	15.5
Cherry Hill	4.0	3.3
Lawrence	4.5	6.7
Livingston	3.3	3.9
Millburn	0.5	2.0
Princeton	7.8	8.2
So. Orange/Mplwd.	6.4	7.3
Woodbridge	1.6	1.3
	% Failing 9th Grade Reading Test 1984-1985	% Failing 9th Grade Math Test 1984-1985
Camden	31.0	26.3
East Orange	28.1	31.3
Irrington	19.7	20.5
Jersey City	33.0	27.5
Newark	27.0	21.7
Paterson	31.2	12.3
Trenton	23.7	30.3
Cherry Hill	0.6	1.5
Lawrence	2.0	5.1
Livingston	1.6	0.3
Millburn	0.8	1.6
Princeton	2.2	3.0
So. Orange/Mplwd.	1.9	2.1
Woodbridge	2.5	2.3

	Eq Value per Pupil 1984-1985	Exp./Pupil 1984-1985
Camden	26,055	3,318
East Orange	40,675	3,270
Irvington	63,994	3,218
Jersey City	62,925	3,685
Newark	38,585	3,879
Paterson	50,622	2,976
Trenton	54,445	3,888
Cherry Hill	192,375	4,645
Lawrence	423,136	5,074
Livingston	359,159	4,793
Millburn	582,669	4,981
Princeton	547,384	5,320
S. Orng/Mplwd	224,942	4,354
Woodbridge	239,686	4,708

Table 2. *Equalized Property Values in Selected New Jersey Communities*

coterminous with life and thus education is viewed as preparation for "something". Those in control of the "something" therefore determine success and failure or, more appropriately, the perception of success and failure. Although performance on certain examinations is often viewed as an indication of intelligence or the lack thereof, psychologically speaking, intelligence is the ability to learn. This ability includes the capacity to solve problems and to utilize knowledge in evolving continuing accommodations to changing environments.¹⁷ The person who knows what he is doing has taken the first step toward intelligent behavior. The person who knows what he wants to do and why, is intelligent.¹⁸ When education is viewed as preparation for the world of work and the economic system is such that 40 percent of the youth in your community are unemployed, including many of those who completed high school, intelligent behavior may indicate that other options must be considered. Prior to the 1980s another option was to complete high school and enter college because a college education gave one a better chance in the world of work. However, college graduates are likely to lack the skills necessary to find a good paying job, and the need to borrow substantial amounts of money to participate in higher education is a barrier to many disadvantaged youths.

Table 3 illustrates the fact that a comparison of the performance of the have nots versus the haves continues throughout the educational system. Again, the reader is warned that the scores do not indicate intelligence as some would have us believe. Evidence presented by Slack and Porter indicated that training for the SAT can effectively help students raise their scores. They stress that the SAT is a standardized test of achievement and should be judged accordingly rather than a test of a student's capacity to learn.¹⁹

The concepts of success and failure in an educational setting seem to be a reoccurring issue. Determining success is impossible if there are no clear goals, so once again we are faced with the question, "what is the purpose of education?". In addition to the general purpose

Table 3. Comparison of SAT Scores for New Jersey and Nation

Year	Math		Verbal	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
1982	353	453	334	416
1983	357	455	334	418
1984	360	458	332	418
1985	366	464	340	425

of education, the question must be posed, does this purpose vary according to the ethnic background of the students, i.e., are the purposes different if the students are black or members of another minority group? Besides listening to the responses of those in power, we must examine some statistics and look for answers within our own communities. Is it an accident that while minorities comprised 29.3 percent of the enrollments in 1982-83 in New Jersey, they accounted for 41.5 percent of the dropouts? (See Table 4)

In every instance, the dropout rate for blacks is at least twice what it is for whites and in many instances the rate is five times higher. What message is being sent to black children? Does this present a problem and if so, is it a "Black Problem" or is it one which affects the state and the nation as a whole? To what extent is the high dropout rate amongst blacks attributable to the classification of a disproportionate number of blacks as learning disabled, (LD), emotionally disturbed (ED) or educationally mentally retarded (EMR)? Are we willing to accept as coincidental that although blacks represent 18.64 percent of the total enrollments in New Jersey they represent 36.59 percent of the total EMR enrollments and 29.74 percent of the total ED enrollments?

By definition, a learning disability is an educationally significant discrepancy between a child's apparent capacity for language behavior and his actual level of language functioning, it may be either a retardation, a disorder or a delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing or arithmetic, resulting from a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional behavioral disturbance and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation or cultural or instructional factors.²⁰ There are many factors which might contribute to learning disabilities. Some of the factors which may be more prevalent in poor families are maternal health and diet and prenatal care. Other factors such as maternal and paternal use of drugs, rubella, maternal cigarette smoking, maternal and paternal alcoholism, maternal social drinking, prematurity and low birth weight all have an impact on later learning.²¹ However, none of the above-cited factors is race related and therefore is as likely to occur in the majority population as in the minority population. Thus, we must look elsewhere for the answer to the disproportionate number of blacks who are classified.

The preceding should lead us to the conclusion that as Paulo Freire believes, education is political, that is, education is utilized either for individual adjustment to a particular system or for the transformation of a system to the ends of the individuals involved.²²

Perhaps what is needed is for educators and educational insti-

tutions to be explicit in stating their aims, since as Freire states, education cannot be value free. According to Henry Giroux, "What is missing in public policy regarding education is any understanding of how power, ideology and politics work on and in schools so as to undermine the basic values of community and democracy. There is no room for understanding how the quest for excellence might be undermined by the realities of social class, privilege and other powerful socioeconomic forces that pull schools in the opposite direction, or for comprehending those school practices that systematically promote failure among certain segments of our nation's youth; or, finally, for understanding that many of the problems schools face are in part political, cultural and economic in nature and transcend the limited focus on individual achievement and success."²³

City		No. White	% White	No. Black	% Black
Camden	Male	6	2.9	120	58.3
	Female	11	6.5	91	53.5
	Total	17	4.5	211	56.1
E. Orange	Male	1	.9	102	96.3
	Female	0	.0	111	100
	Total	1	.4	214	98.2
Newark	Male	57	7.3	568	73.1
	Female	43	6.8	476	75.7
	Total	100	7.0	1044	74.3
Irvington	Male	36	24.6	101	69.2
	Female	37	25.7	95	66
	Total	73	25.2	196	67.6
Jersey City	Male	115	21.3	235	43.5
	Female	72	20.2	200	56.2
	Total	187	21	435	48.5
Trenton	Male	66	20.8	211	66.6
	Female	51	21.1	166	68.6
	Total	117	20.9	377	67.4
Paterson	Male	86	12.6	363	52.8
	Female	59	10.9	276	50.8
	Total	145	11.7	639	52

Table 4. *Drop-Outs in Selected Cities in New Jersey by Race and Sex, 1982-1983*

Conclusions

There is a need for parental involvement and community involvement in the educational system of this state and this nation. There is a need for goal setting and a system for holding those responsible for the accomplishment of the goals accountable for their actions or lack thereof. It is time to stop blaming the victim for what continues to be the "miseducation of blacks" while at the same time it is imperative that blacks relinquish that position of powerlessness and act on their own behalf.

A crisis in education exists if a significant proportion of the black students in our educational system are unsuccessful. If we are unable to instill in our youth a quest for knowledge, a love for lifelong learning and the ability to think critically, the system has failed—not the students. If there was any meaning to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, then the fact that New Jersey schools 34 years later are the fourth most segregated in the nation is an indictment of the system and corroboration of the perception that indeed a crisis does exist.

The state of black education in New Jersey leads me to paraphrase Countee Cullen's poem, *Yet Do I Marvel*: "Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: 'To make [a child] black, and bid him [learn!]' There can be no denial that black students do learn and do succeed in a system that discourages self-awareness and pride among blacks. There also can be no denial that the accomplishments of blacks would be far greater if equality of educational opportunity was a reality rather than a phrase. Finally, there can be no denial that in a nation which professes to require an educated citizenry, some steps must be taken to bridge the gap between the education of blacks and whites and that policies must be developed and implemented which will foster critical thinking."

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School Finance Reform in New Jersey

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For two decades New Jersey has been confronted with the massive problems that face the children in urban public schools. For nearly as long the Legislature and the Department of Education have failed to enact and implement policies that are responsive to the most pressing needs of these children. The consequences of the state's failure are enormous and will impact on the social and economic fabric of the state for decades to come. The impact on the children of poor urban school districts is incalculable. It becomes more tragic each school year.

The struggle to resolve the educational problems of urban children in New Jersey reached notoriety in the early 1970s when parents in several urban cities sued the state to compel improvement in their schools. That historic suit was *Robinson v. Cahill*.¹ The parents charged that the state's education laws violated the federal and state equal protection clauses and the New Jersey Constitutional guarantee that each child of school age receive a "thorough and efficient" education. The parents prevailed in *Robinson* when the New Jersey Supreme Court struck down the state education law and ordered the legislature to enact a statute that would fulfill the state's constitutional obligation to provide a thorough and efficient education for urban children.²

The Legislature's response to the Supreme Court's mandate was the enactment of the present state education law, Chapter 212, L. 1975. Today, Chapter 212 is being challenged in a lawsuit similar to *Robinson* known as *Abbott v. Burke*.³ *Abbott* was brought by a class of urban parents and children from Jersey City, Camden, Irvington and East Orange who claim that Chapter 212 has failed to alleviate the conditions in urban education that the Supreme Court ruled violated the state constitution. They assert that under Chapter 212 the problems confronting urban children have increased to a magnitude and cost that jeopardize any hope of their resolution in the near future.

Urban Schools and the Impact of Poverty

At the heart of the *Abbott* case are the stark realities of the urban public education experience. New Jersey's urban public schools are located within the confines of urban cities. A majority of those cities including Camden, Paterson, Newark, Jersey City and East Orange are extremely poor. New Jersey has a number of cities that are considered to be among the 100 poorest cities in America.⁴ Three of those cities are among the top 25 poorest in America. A large majority of the city's inhabitants are Black and Hispanic. In addition, the Black and Hispanic children that attend the public schools represent a larger percentage of the school district enrollment than the percentage of the city's population. For example, in Irvington, Black and Hispanic residents

comprise 52 percent of the city's population but 92 percent of the children in Irvington's public schools are Black and Hispanic.⁵

Urban public schools have many intractable disadvantages that result directly from the poverty of the cities in which they are located and the inability of those cities to raise and allocate adequate resources for the public schools. One ubiquitous and seemingly unreasonable disadvantage involves the status of the school buildings in urban districts. A tour of any urban public school district would visually demonstrate the poor condition of the district's school buildings. Most of the school buildings are old and inadequate for even the most basic academic needs. They are located on sites that are far too small and significantly below the acreage required under contemporary educational planning standards. Because the schools have little playground space the children cannot be provided with athletic and recreation programs. These old buildings are in constant need of repair and renovation and are literally falling apart due to the wear and tear of decades of use.

These buildings stifle the academic program because they were not designed to meet the demands of a modern education. For example, most lack sufficient space to adequately house broad collections of library materials, not to mention the audio visual equipment and computers that are standard features in today's libraries.⁶ The buildings cannot accommodate the equipment needed for quality physical education and health programs nor do they have adequate laboratories for science. They do not possess rooms to accommodate small group instruction, individual instruction or counseling. There are very few, if any, practice rooms for music or the dramatic arts, inadequate performance areas, insufficient locker rooms, shower facilities, cafeterias and a general lack of storage.

The schools in nearly all of New Jersey's urban districts are severely overcrowded. Because, there are far more children enrolled than the buildings were designed to accommodate, there are not enough classrooms to match curriculum needs. The unfortunate result is that the poor urban districts must use spaces like coatrooms, pantries, closets, stairwell landings, corridors, hallways, basement storage bins and auditorium balconies for classrooms. Some teachers and children in these schools don't have a permanent classroom and therefore must 'float' from classroom to classroom with each changing period. This situation not only compromises the academic program but brutalizes and humiliates both the teachers and the children.

The overcrowding problem has a debilitating affect on academic instruction in these urban schools. Overcrowding causes a majority of urban academic classes to contain an unreasonably large number of children. Classes, even in the academically critical early elementary grades, kindergarten through four, usually number in the high twenties and all too often reach the thirties. Because of the large number of children in the classes the teachers are unable to provide the individualized instruction and attention that the children need. The inability to provide individual attention poses a major problem in urban schools because urban children have so many academic and

personal needs.

Urban public school districts are unable to provide curricula that include all of the academic and vocational courses that are needed in a modern educational program. Important courses in mathematics, science, art, music, foreign languages, vocational education and industrial arts are not available in the numbers that they should be. Advanced placement courses are seldom available. These curriculum problems result from the fact that the urban districts cannot afford all of the teachers they need, do not have the necessary facilities to provide classrooms for the needed teachers and do not have even minimally adequate equipment. As a result of these deficiencies urban districts have great difficulty recruiting and maintaining teachers in the critical subject areas of mathematics, science, music and art. Many teachers will not work in urban districts for the simple reason that they lack the facilities, equipment and supplies to conduct meaningful and rewarding classes.

Urban public schools lack both the facilities and sophisticated equipment needed in modern educational programs. This deficiency is especially apparent in the areas of science and computer education. Most urban schools either have no science laboratories or have laboratories that were outdated in the 1950s or earlier. The laboratories that are in place cannot accommodate each child in the experimental subjects like chemistry, biology or physics much less advanced placement courses. Nor do these laboratories have the appropriate electrical design, water and gas connections, storage for chemicals and specimens and the air conditioning, exhaust and other safety features needed for modern science. The districts cannot afford expensive equipment like electron microscopes nor do they possess the materials and specimens needed for biology experiments or the chemicals needed for chemistry laboratory.

Today all urban schools have some computers for instructional purposes. The problem is that they don't have them in adequate numbers to allow all the children to develop computer skills beyond mere computer literacy. Too often the children must share computer time with one or two other children. Additionally, urban public schools seldom have resources to integrate computer technology with other curriculum areas like mathematics, science, music and vocational education.

The urban schools do not have adequate equipment in vocational education, industrial arts and home economics. They simply do not have the classrooms or instructors needed for a comprehensive vocational program. Nor do they have funds for vocational counselors, which are essential to orienting children to the realities of the job market. There are cases where urban districts have one or two sophisticated programs like graphic arts or automobile repair but in no case do they have consistently broad and well-equipped programs.

It is beyond dispute that the library is one of the most important facilities in any academic institution. In today's world a quality library includes a wide range of media materials and equipment for the purpose of increasing childrens' appreciation of the complexities and

sophistication of modern research and communications. The libraries in most urban public schools are a disaster. Very few have adequate space to make all of their print, film and tape offerings available. All too often major sections of the library must be used for academic classrooms. Perhaps, most importantly, the libraries in urban districts consistently lack modern equipment to orient children to modern research and communication methods.

A detailed account of the deplorable conditions and massive needs in urban schools would consume several well-sized volumes. These conditions and needs all relate directly to the unavailability of financial resources. They have plagued urban districts for years. Each year the cost of these essential improvements increases.

Most of these conditions and needs were recognized by Hudson County Superior Court Judge Theodore I. Botter in his landmark *Robinson* opinion of 1972.⁷ In that opinion, known as the "Botter Decision," he identified the problems confronting urban districts that he found most striking. Among those problems was the impact of the age and condition of the school buildings in urban districts on the ability of those districts to provide a quality education for urban children.⁸ Almost sixteen years later most of those buildings are still in use and are still in the same deplorable condition that they were in when the "Botter Decision" was rendered. No proposal of statewide scope has been put forward to resolve those problems.

Among the most critical and important findings made by Judge Botter was the existence of substantial disparities in expenditures on education and in the quality of educational programs between poor urban districts and affluent suburban districts. Since 1972 those disparities have substantially increased in both expenditures and in the quality of program. The catalogue of suburban advantages is a long one. Affluent suburban public schools offer their children a very different reality than that experienced by their urban counterparts. Where urban schools are engulfed in poverty and need, affluent suburban schools are handsomely funded. Among the advantages that affluent districts enjoy is the use of newer facilities that meet the demands of modern education. School buildings in affluent districts are generally located on adequate sites that allow the children not only sufficient recreation and play space but also facilitate interscholastic competition. They have an unjustifiably broader range of curriculum offerings and can afford to provide their children with the sophisticated, modern equipment and technology that is essential in science, mathematics, computer science, music and vocational education. Most affluent schools are also able to offer a broad range of foreign languages.

Affluent suburban schools rarely have classes that are overcrowded. Class sizes, at the elementary level, rarely exceed 15 children per class. In many districts there is a teacher aide in elementary classrooms to assist the teachers in the implementation of the instructional program. Because the classes are so small teachers have the ability to address the individual academic and personal needs of each child.

The Suburban Advantages

Equally important, suburban districts are able to provide greater resources for the training of their teachers and administrators. They can afford to send their teachers to workshops and conferences and in some cases to assist teachers who seek advanced degrees. They can also provide teachers with some money for research and development. Because of their resource advantages they provide teachers with greater opportunities to teach creative and advanced courses and offer teachers better equipment and generally superior working conditions.

A System of Inequality

In *Robinson*, the parents alleged that many of the major disparities between poor urban and affluent suburban schools were related to differences in the level of education expenditures. They also asserted that the principal cause of the differences in the level of expenditures were caused by the method of funding education established by state law. The Supreme Court agreed with the parents. The Court acknowledged that there was a nexus between the availability of financial resources and the quality of an educational program.⁸ Based on that proposition the court struck down the method of funding education incorporated within the education law and ordered the Legislature to devise a new formula that would eliminate deficiencies.¹⁰

The funding formula in Chapter 212 that was devised in response to the Supreme Court's order is known as a guaranteed tax base formula. That approach is currently under attack in *Abbott*. It, like its predecessor, is predicated on local property taxes as the primary means of financing public education. Its purported purpose is to equalize the tax burden on local communities.

Under Chapter 212 the level of state funding that a district receives is directly related to the amount of local property tax revenue that the local district can allocate to education. Those school districts that are in poor municipalities with weak property tax bases that cannot allocate sufficient tax dollars for the education budget receive what is known as equalization aid. Under the equalization aid formulas, if a district only receives a small percentage of its budgetary need from local tax revenues, the remaining percentages will be paid with the state monies and any federal assistance the district can secure. Some poor urban districts receive as much as 70 percent of their annual budget in state equalization aid.¹¹

Those districts that are in communities that can afford to fund the local school district budget through tax revenues are deemed minimum aid districts.¹² Under the formula they receive state aid commensurate with approximately 10 percent of their budget. The state funds received by minimum aid districts are used to augment the school program or for property tax relief.

The amount of money that a district spends on education is determined by the total amount of dollars in the school budget divided by the number of children enrolled in the district. This figure represents the amount that the district spends per pupil on education. This per pupil expenditure indicator allows the state and local school administrations to understand how much a district is spending on the education of its children and to compare expenditures among districts throughout the state. Per pupil expenditure is directly related to the

dollar amount of the local school district budget, which consists of local tax dollars, combined with state and federal assistance

The fiscal condition of the community in which a school district is located is critical to the level of local funding available for the budget. In most poor urban cities funding for education must compete with other municipal services like police, fire, and street repair for the tax revenues. Poor cities, like those in New Jersey, are overburdened by the cost of providing a broad range of municipal services and have great difficulty raising sufficient revenues to maintain all of these needed services. Many cities in New Jersey would have to drastically cut essential municipal services like police and fire if they were unable to secure emergency state financial assistance. The result of this municipal poverty is that all of the municipal services are under-funded. The impact of this phenomenon on education is devastating.

When the *Robinson* court in the early 1970s compared the underlying property wealth and the per pupil expenditures of poor urban districts with those of affluent suburban districts the differences were startling. A comparison of the tax rates was equally startling. The court found that poor urban districts were expending significantly less per pupil but were being taxed at a significantly higher rate.¹⁸ A significantly greater tax effort by urban districts did not produce greater resources for education. Consideration of Table 5 clearly illustrates this trend.

Table 5. *Expenditures of Poor Urban Districts and Affluent Suburban Districts*

Districts	1975-76			1984-85		
	Equalized Prop. Value/Pupil	Equalized School Tax Rate	Current \$ Expend. per Pupil	Equalized Prop. Value/Pupil	Equalized School Tax Rate	Current \$ Expend. Per Pupil
Camden	\$20,461	\$2.01	\$1,838	\$20,055	\$1.83	\$3,318
Cherry Hill	86,924	2.21	1,877	192,375	1.73	4,645
East Orange	\$5,998	3.39	1,548	40,875	2.84	3,370
Millburn	144,851	1.37	2,188	582,669	0.76	4,981
Irrington	50,813	2.39	1,511	63,994	1.49	3,518
Livingston	88,973	1.81	1,563	369,159	1.11	4,793
Jersey City	\$3,081	2.37	1,498	63,925	1.35	3,685
Paramus*	129,889	1.41	2,060	477,332	0.94	6,376
State Average	67,031	1.89	1,520	190,401	1.33	3,983

*Report lacked a comparison district in Hudson County for Jersey City

When one considers that a disparity of \$1,000 per pupil in a classroom of 25 children is the equivalent of \$25,000 per classroom it is easy to understand the depreciation of urban schools. Calculation of the dollar differences, as computed above, for each classroom in an urban school district demonstrates the basis of the staggering differences among school districts in New Jersey. No wonder the low level of funding in the urban districts has a monumental impact on all of the academic programs and facilities discussed earlier.

The *Robinson* Court concluded that the disparities in per pupil expenditures in existence in 1972-1973 were so stark that children in the urban districts were denied a thorough and efficient education.

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Accordingly, the Court struck down the existing funding formula and ordered the legislature to devise a new approach. The objective of the Court was not to reduce the level of funding in suburban districts but rather to bring urban schools up to a constitutionally acceptable standard. In so doing, the Court linked funding to the mandate of the state Constitution.¹⁴ The Court saw funding as directly related to the requirement that each child in the state have an equal educational opportunity. The Court also accepted the proposition that without additional resources children in poor urban districts could not receive an equal educational opportunity.

An Inadequate Response

Sixteen years after the Supreme Court's initial ruling in *Robinson* we face the staggering knowledge that the equal educational opportunity mandated by the Supreme Court is further from realization than ever. The urban public schools are in greater financial need than ever because the state education law has failed to reduce the disparities deemed unconstitutional in *Robinson*. Urban districts not only lag far behind affluent districts in expenditures per pupil but are also far below the state average (see chart). Similar disparities exist in other categories of school finance like capital outlay and debt service expenditures. In response to this continuing travesty, urban parents in *Abbott v. Burke* petitioned the courts to evoke the New Jersey constitutional guarantee of a thorough and efficient education in order to reverse the persistent decline of urban public schools. They also seek Constitutional protection under the equal protection guarantee.

The Constitution of New Jersey provides for public education in Article VIII, Section IV, paragraph 1, which reads:

The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all the children in the state between the ages of five and eighteen years.

There has been a long-standing debate in New Jersey over many years about the meaning of this constitutional provision. The Supreme Court was directly confronted with the question of the practical meaning of the Constitutional mandate in *Robinson*. In an effort to put this question to rest the Supreme Court analyzed the history of the Constitutional provision and concluded that it meant nothing less than that every child of school age must be guaranteed an equal educational opportunity. The Court stated:

The Constitution's guarantee must be understood to embrace that educational opportunity which is needed in the contemporary setting to equip a child for his role as a citizen and as a competitor in the labor market.¹⁶

The Legislature in obedience to the Constitution, enacted Chapter 212 and included the evidence of the Supreme Court's definition in its preamble. Accordingly, the statute defines the goal of a thorough and efficient system of education as follows:

The goal of a thorough and efficient education system of free public school shall be to provide to all children in New Jersey, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location, the educational opportunity which will prepare them to function politically, economically and socially in a democratic society.¹⁶

To further explicate the thorough and efficient education guarantee, the Legislature promulgated ten elements of a thorough and efficient education. The legislative elements require each local district to achieve the following:

1. Establishment of educational goals at both the state and local levels;
2. Encouragement of public involvement in the establishment of educational goals;
3. Instruction intended to produce the attainment of reasonable levels of proficiency in the basic communications and computational skills;
4. A breadth of program offerings designed to develop the individual talents and abilities of pupils;
5. Programs and supportive services for all pupils especially those who are educationally disadvantaged or who have special educational needs;
6. Adequately equipped, sanitary and secure physical facilities and adequate materials and supplies;
7. Qualified instructional and other personnel;
8. Efficient administrative procedures;
9. An adequate state program of research and development, and
10. Evaluation and monitoring programs at both the state and local levels.

The Constitutional significance of the Legislature's action is to affirm that body's recognition that it is the duty of the state to insure that children be provided either the ability to compete for higher education or the opportunity to develop skills that will lead them to meaningful jobs.

The *Abbott* parents contend that the state has miserably failed to provide urban children the equal educational opportunity mandated by the Supreme Court. They seek to demonstrate that enormous resource deficiencies in urban schools deny equal educational opportunity to their children. In their view, the awful deficiencies and high level of need in the urban districts demonstrate the magnitude of indifference by the Legislature and the Department of Education to the order of the Supreme Court and neglect of their respective Constitutional responsibilities. It is for these reasons that the *Abbott* parents are urging the courts to overturn Chapter 212 and, once again, compel the Legislature to provide the funding needed to give urban children the opportunity for a meaningful livelihood.

Defining a Responsible State Role

The Department of Education (DOE) casts the burden of the terrible problems that confront urban school districts onto those same local school districts. The DOE contends, even in the face of the well documented enormous per pupil expenditure differences, that urban districts have sufficient resources to provide necessary academic programs and facilities. In the DOE's view, the problems that confront the urban districts are caused by local administrative mismanagement.

The DOE's contention that the problems in urban districts throughout the state are caused by administrative mismanagement misses the forest for the trees. The DOE through its monitoring and evaluation processes and other administrative mechanisms has the capability of identifying and remedying any form of local mismanagement. Additionally, the DOE has the authority to conduct hearings for the purpose of uncovering any improprieties in local school district administration. To date, however, the state has not come forward with any major proof of mismanagement in any urban school districts. More importantly, even if the DOE were to identify substantial mismanagement in one or more urban districts, that would not explain the pervasive statewide problems all urban districts experience and have experienced for so long. It is simply beyond belief that every administration in every urban district over the last twenty years has mismanaged their responsibilities or engaged in improprieties.

The DOE also contends that the principle of 'local control' is of such importance to fundamental American values and state interests that its protection justifies the persistent disparities in per pupil expenditures between poor urban and affluent suburban districts. The principal of local control asserts that local communities have the right to determine the quality of education they desire for their children as long as they don't fall below minimum state standards. That determination is understood to be reflected in how much a community is willing to tax itself to fund the education of their children. Accordingly, Town X should not be compelled by state government to provide a particular quantity or quality of education programming in its schools but should be free to choose as long as the program meets minimum state requirements. Town X's educational program can, therefore, be of greater quality and quantity than City Y's if the residents in Town X decide that education is more important than the residents of City Y and are willing to pay for it.

Most reasonable people in New Jersey do not dispute the importance of local decision making in education. Many more would concede that it is among the most important of American rights. Nevertheless the argument for local control has little to do with the state's duty to provide equal educational opportunity for all the children in the state, regardless of residence. No responsible person in the state of New Jersey would advocate craven uniformity in educational opportunity or academic achievements. Diversity, nevertheless, cannot condone the effective denial to urban children of the means of securing a livelihood in this state.

There are several factors that deeply implicate the state in the failure of urban school districts. One major factor is that since Chapter 212 has been in operation, the Legislature has, with the exception of the

first two years, failed to fully fund the education formula. This indicates that less dollars have been appropriated than are needed by equalization aid districts to operate at the level of funding approved by the DOE. The funding disparities discussed earlier are aggravated because the great balance of urban budgets consists of state equalization aid. When the Legislature fails to fully fund the formula these poor urban districts experience a severe revenue shortfall. The end result is, because equalization aid districts do not have the tax base to fully fund their educational program they lose money desperately needed for education programs. Minimum aid districts, on the other hand, receive roughly 10 percent of their funding in state assistance. In these districts, state assistance is used to reduce the percentage of school budget paid by the local district taxes thus serving the purpose of tax relief. The residents of the affluent municipality receive the equivalent of a rebate in state education assistance. In years when the state fails to fully fund the formula and urban districts lose money for educational programs, minimum aid districts lose an increment of state funds that they would ordinarily use for local tax relief. Their educational programs are not compromised.

The Commissioner of Education has also failed to utilize available statutory authority to resolve the funding problems facing urban districts. Under current education law the Commissioner has authority to approve or reject local district budgets and to order districts to increase the education budget to resolve any deficiencies.¹⁸ Each year the DOE reviews all local district budgets and the relationship of budget to the educational programs and needs of the districts. The DOE is, therefore, fully aware of the financial needs of urban school districts. The Supreme Court in *Robinson* very clearly ordered DOE to use its authority to compel local school districts to raise the money necessary to provide equal educational opportunity or compensate for local failures to reach that level. There are very few cases, if any, of the commissioner ordering urban school districts to increase their budget for the purpose of providing equal educational opportunity.

Another glaring example of state neglect involves school facilities. In 1973, the Legislature authorized the Department of Education to conduct a state-wide facilities survey. Five years later, the DOE authorized what is known as the Uniplan survey. When the Uniplan survey was completed evidence was presented to the state indicating that it would cost 2.85 billion dollars to bring all the school buildings in New Jersey up to modern standards. Uniplan also indicated that there were massive facilities needs in the urban districts and that a large percentage of that 2.85 billion was required in the urban districts. Uniplan also indicated that due to normal inflation the cost estimate for capital improvements would increase at a rate of ten percent per annum until the problems are resolved.

The Uniplan findings also demonstrated that school buildings in poor urban districts were much older and in poorer condition than school buildings in affluent districts. Additionally, the state had knowledge that old buildings were not designed to facilitate the needs of a modern curriculum and knowledge of all of the other inadequacies of urban facilities. Yet, with this store of information the state has failed

to appropriate any major resources for the resolution of the facilities problems in urban districts. The state has full knowledge that if the Uniplan inflation calculation is accurate the cost of remedying facilities problems identified in 1978 would more than double by 1988. That means that in today's dollars, the cost of improving facilities would be over five billion dollars.

Very few adults can even imagine the conditions under which today's urban children go to school. The litigation in *Abbott v. Burke*, like that in its predecessor *Robinson v. Cahill*, may be the only chance left to compel the state to meet its constitutional responsibilities to the children of this state. Failure of the parents' case in *Abbott v. Burke* could very well mean the loss of the greater part of several generations of children as productive and contributing members of society. The unwillingness to reform the state's method of funding and administering education in New Jersey would therefore have the most devastating consequences.

The most awful consequences would be the continued deterioration of the physical and instructional conditions in the urban districts. Accompanying this dreadful decline would inevitably be the continued academic and personal failure of the children in those districts. What we confront in New Jersey is the probability that an overwhelming majority of urban, minority children, if not rescued by the Supreme Court, will be unable to obtain those skills necessary to secure meaningful employment and make a positive contribution to New Jersey. Failure on a scale this monumental will have a profound impact on the future prosperity of all the residents of this state.

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Responsibility with Sensitivity: The Need for Intervention

No educational issue in recent history has raised as much controversy as New Jersey Governor Kean's proposal to seize and operate failing school districts. Teachers, principals, administrators, boards of education, state educational agencies, the state Board of Education, the state Department of Education and those serving in the state Senate and Assembly have been locking horns over the takeover plan since its unveiling in June, 1986. It has been called a political issue, a union issue, a racial issue, a funding issue, a control issue.

But in the final analysis, it is a moral issue. And like all moral issues, it deserves to be evaluated and implemented with sensitivity to those it will affect. When we talk about takeover, then, we are talking about children, children from urban districts, many—if not most—of whom are black or Hispanic and whose social and economic problems may be completely foreign to those in suburbia enjoying New Jersey's "new prosperity."

The moral issue at hand is one of responsibility. By its very nature, education demands responsibility, but to ensure the successful execution of that responsibility, we have laws that define and direct it. Under the Public School Education Act of 1975, it is the undeniable responsibility of the state, via the powers of the commissioner of education, to provide every public school student in New Jersey with a thorough and efficient education. The 1975 act also empowered the state to intervene when a district failed to meet state-determined standards on its own.

Prompting the passage of the Public School Education Act of 1975—or the "T&E" (thorough and efficient) law—was the Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Robinson v. Cahill*. The court determined that New Jersey's system for funding public education, which depended largely on local property taxes, was unconstitutional. The Legislature was deemed responsible for defining the term "thorough and efficient" and devising a new funding scheme that would secure for all public school students in the state a thorough and efficient education.

In the event of a local school district's failure to meet state standards for certification, the 1975 T&E law granted the state authority "to issue an administrative order specifying a remedial plan to the local board of education, which plan may include budgetary changes and other measures the state board determines to be appropriate."

The commissioner of education was able to test these powers when the Trenton School District was subject to a state takeover and

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the state Supreme Court called upon to rule *In the Matter of the Board of Education of the City of Trenton*. The court maintained that the T&E law empowered the commissioner to force corrective action in the areas of curriculum, finances and facilities. Specifically, the commissioner was able to order the transfer of funds in the school budget, raise taxes to pay for school improvements and appoint a full time supervisor to monitor the school district's operations and take action as needed. In Trenton, the state supervisor reorganized certain programs—including staff and curriculum—and controlled the district's hiring and firing practices.

Yet, state officials contend that the Trenton takeover was a failure. State takeovers were equally unsuccessful in Newark, where state audits were conducted for ten years with no reported results, and in East Orange, where Assemblywoman Mildred Barry Garvin (D-East Orange) has said, "Race was an issue." In sending an all white team of auditors to a district that is 80 percent black, the department was insensitive to the community, Garvin maintains. In the eyes of the community, the state appeared as a threatening, elitist entity, or as Garvin phrased it "the Great White Father telling us what to do."

Perhaps we should view the state as a kind of parent, responsible for teaching, disciplining and protecting its children without regard to race, religion, creed or tax rate. Success stories in urban school districts there are. Nonetheless, the hard data—state monitoring results, standardized test scores, statistics on dropout rates—show that there are school districts in New Jersey that are unable to provide a thorough and efficient education to their students.

We cannot sit by idly and let this continue. The state has the powers to take appropriate action under the law. To do nothing would be the height of insensitivity and irresponsibility. Indeed, the intervention bills that have been revived in the state Legislature can provide for a markedly improved process than what we have seen in the past. And the reason lies in the fact that they would provide a vehicle to recognize local school district needs—the education needs as cited by the local community.

The New Jersey School Boards Association could never have supported the intervention bills—as it does now—unless such community input was addressed.

This is where local boards of education come into play. By allowing the community to provide input during takeover, via its board of education, the state is saying that the seized district has a right to speak. By asking the community to provide that same input via the local board of education, the state is saying, "We care about what you have to say. We want to work with you. You can teach us about your community and its needs, we can teach you all we know about educational reform."

This alliance is crucial, for it is impossible for state officials to appreciate the needs of a district solely by its student test scores. Sensitivity is demonstrated when communication is exchanged and responsibility shared.

While the necessity for state intervention—as a last resort—is apparent, the root causes of a school district's failure must be identified

if educational reform is to take hold and work. Help is needed, but simply citing ineptitude or callousness on the part of school leaders or educators as the cause of a district's failure is myopic.

Is it a coincidence that the districts projecting the lowest test scores are the very districts experiencing the highest dropout, teen pregnancy, drug abuse and crime rates? What makes these districts, which are primarily urban, different from their suburban counterparts? Why the inequity?

One possible answer lies in the current funding system, which may have improved upon the tax reliant system deemed unconstitutional in 1973, but has failed to eliminate the disparities in the ability to pay for education. Urban districts must provide services, programs and protection that suburban districts have little need for—such as dropout prevention programs, day care centers, drug abuse intervention and treatment and school-based health clinics. Providing these essential services helps to drain urban districts' funding from the state. At the same time, these districts are least able to raise necessary funds, the equalized valuation per pupil is extremely low.

Declining tax bases contribute to the problem, which is further intensified by urban districts' need for police, fire and sanitation services, for public health and housing programs and so forth. Urban communities must supply the funds necessary to provide these services and have enough left over for education.

The case of *Abbott v. Burke*—in which the plaintiffs maintain that inadequate funding, not improper management or school board politics, is the primary cause of poor performance in urban districts—may eventually prompt a solution to this problem. In addition, the State and Local Expenditure and Revenue Policy Commission (SLERP) has been studying the funding crisis for three years and is expected to report its findings by January 1988. So, while mechanisms are in place to find adequate solutions, the present, dismal situation can only make one think, "Seeing is believing."

In the meantime, we must consider the responsibility accorded the Legislature under the T&E law: full funding for education. New Jersey's 1987-88 budget fell short of funding figures determined under the T&E law by some \$89 million.

What happens when local school districts encounter shortfalls in state aid? Districts are usually unable to pass the full impact of these cuts on to local property tax-payers. For most, any reduction in state aid not only means an increase in local taxes but also means teachers let go, programs not delivered, guidance counseling not given, books not bought.

It is not surprising that the districts with the greatest dependency on state aid—the ones losing the most aid—would be the prime targets of state takeover legislation. Talk of higher standards and visions of excellence are cruel hoaxes when the resources to implement them are not forthcoming. What good, for example, are the governor's minimum salary program and proposed alternate route to teacher certification—both intended to attract better quality teachers—when these are the first employees necessarily dismissed when districts are denied funding?

The shortfall underscores a grinding irony for school districts. As they receive proportionately less money to do their main mission—educate children—societal strains force them to take on an ever-broadening social agenda. Consider the cases of last Spring's four teen suicides, which received widespread media coverage. In the public commentary following these tragedies, we were reminded that schools—not the church, not the community, not even the parents—but schools were most frequently asked, "What could have been done to prevent this?" The tentative answer—to improve guidance programs—underscores our problem: guidance counselors are among the first let go when schools cut budgets.

There is a great need for programs to avert teen suicide, to serve "latchkey" children and to combat drug and alcohol abuse. Nonetheless, proposals for such programs come with either no funding or only token start-up funding.

Schools must shoulder more than their share of the burden of meeting the challenge of mending what many believe to be the deteriorating social fabric of society while still performing their fundamental duty to transmit knowledge and educate children. Full funding represents but a minimum effort to meet our existing obligations, obligations so fundamental they were given the sanction of law.

Healthy relationships are built on responsibility and sensitivity. In education—more than in any other field—forming healthy relationships is essential to success. As Thomas Carlyle said, "The great law of culture [is to] let each become all that he was created capable of being." All of us involved in education have the same objective: to give all children the opportunity to develop as fully as possible so that they might live happy, healthy and productive lives. Anyone who denies this responsibility or lacks the sensitivity to appreciate it fully should have nothing to do with education—on any level.

Teachers, principals, administrators, boards of education, state educational agencies, those serving in the state Senate and Assembly, and those assigned the task of implementing a state takeover must demonstrate that they are responsible and communicate their sensitivity to others if change is to be effected.

It has been said that "The ability to accept responsibility is the measure of the man." I would like to suggest that the ability to accept responsibility and to carry it out with sensitivity is the measure of the educational and law-making bodies that are entrusted with the care of our youth and our hope for the future.

The issue of funding aside, the current state intervention legislation promises sensitivity on the part of the state as it carries out its ultimate educational responsibility.

Expanding "Schools of Choice" for African-Americans: Independent Neighborhood Schools in New Jersey

School choice means "giving parents the right to select their children's schools from among a range of possible options."¹ During the 1980s both private and public schools have been the subject of policy debates involving the "schools of choice" concept. In the early part of the decade the Reagan administration used the "schools of choice" concept to promote tuition tax vouchers for private schools. More recently, the "schools of choice" concept has been used increasingly to describe the emergence of magnet schools as options in public education.²

The "schools of choice" concept should be expanded to include "independent neighborhood schools" that are owned and operated by African Americans. Dr. Joan Ratteray documented more than 250 "independent neighborhood schools" in African-American, Hispanic and Asian communities in the United States and the Virgin Islands. The majority of these schools are in African-American communities and are owned and operated by African Americans.³

"Independent neighborhood schools" are neighborhood-based, self-help alternatives to large public school systems. They form a distinct group of private schools that are not part of organized parochial school systems nor are they among the "elite" schools that cater to children from the most affluent families.

These schools are options for a growing number of African-American families who are concerned about the adequacy of public schools, desire greater control over their children's schooling, and wish for school values to be more congruent with their own beliefs and aspirations.⁴

This paper will describe the salient characteristics of African-American independent neighborhood schools. It will also discuss the implications that three educational policy issues present for these schools. These issues are 1) efforts to strengthen the teaching profession; 2) the "cultural literacy" movement; and 3) tuition vouchers.

Only recently have studies begun to systematically document the existence of independent neighborhood schools and to identify the characteristics that distinguish them from other available schooling options. The term "independent neighborhood schools" was introduced by Dr. Ratteray in 1983 to summarize her findings following a four-month tour in which she visited 40 such schools. Since then Ratteray and Shujaa have completed a study that identifies in detail the characteristics that appear to be common to these schools.⁵

Independent neighborhood schools are found in both religious and secular contexts. They are distinguished as religious or secular ac-

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Characteristics of Independent Neighbor- hood Schools

according to (a) affiliation and (b) emphasis on religion in the curriculum. Among the independent neighborhood schools studied by Ratteray and Shuyaa, religious schools tend to have higher average enrollments and charge less tuition than secular schools. This pattern is consistent with statistics reported by the Bureau of the Census for private schools in general.⁸

There are five basic characteristics that distinguish independent neighborhood schools from other types of private schools:

1. They are primarily an urban phenomenon.
2. Their enrollment is racially homogeneous.
3. The commitment to social change in institutionalized.
4. The school culture resembles a neighborhood school even though the students may commute several miles.
5. They are operationally autonomous.

The administrators of four African-American independent neighborhood schools in New Jersey were interviewed about the characteristics of their respective schools. Two of the schools are located in Newark and the others are located in New Brunswick and Trenton. The following discussion highlights the characteristics of African-American independent neighborhood schools using examples from the New Jersey schools that we studied.

Urban Concentration

Independent neighborhood schools are most likely to be found in big cities. The cities with the greatest numbers of these schools are New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, Atlanta, Miami, San Francisco/Oakland, Boston, Newark and Houston. The public school systems in these cities are among the largest in the United States and

Table 6. *Selected Characteristics. Four Independent African-American Schools*

School	Newark 1	Newark 2	N. Brunswick	Trenton
Year started	1969	1959	1974	1976
Grades offered	pre-K to 8	pre-K to 9	pre-K to 12	pre-K to 5
No. pupils first gr. & up	317	225	87	31
Current budget	\$1 million	\$171,000	\$208,000	\$85,000
% budget from tuition	85	70	79	94
Annual tuition	\$1490	\$1100	\$1500	\$1400
Tax exempt	yes	yes	yes	yes

among the highest in the percentage of African American pupils enrolled.

A recent Gallup Poll showed central city residents to be the least likely to give their public schools "A" or "B" ratings and the most likely to give them "D" or "F" ratings.⁷ Consequently, in 1985, the overall private school enrollment rate for African Americans living in metropolitan areas was 10 times greater than the rate for those in non-metropolitan areas.⁸

The distribution of African-American independent neighborhood schools in New Jersey is mostly in the Newark area. Full-time day schools are also operating in Trenton, Paterson and New Brunswick. Efforts to establish independent neighborhood schools are occurring in Jersey City and Camden. These New Jersey cities, like their national counterparts, represent the state's largest urban districts and have the highest African-American enrollments.

The national survey of administrators of independent neighborhood schools conducted by Ratteray and Shyaa found that in more than 75 percent of these schools, over 80 percent of the pupils were African-American. Further, in about half of the schools, 100 percent of the pupils were African-American.

In three of the four New Jersey schools studied, the enrollments are 100 percent African-American. Enrollments at the fourth school averaged nearly 95 percent African-American.

In both the national sample and the New Jersey schools that were studied non-discriminatory admissions policies were found. The homogeneity among independent neighborhood schools is, therefore, not due to the exclusion of pupils from other racial and cultural groups. In fact, since each of the New Jersey schools is tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code they must make a statement of non-discrimination a matter of public record.

The pattern of homogeneous enrollment is partially explained by the racial demographics of the cities in which the schools are located. Another explanation is that African-American parents choose these schools because they perceive them as the best educational options for their children's needs. African-American independent neighborhood schools emphasize cultural affirmation as part of a solid academic program. A Trenton parent interviewed in an earlier study conducted by one of the authors expressed her feelings in this manner:

What [the independent neighborhood school] is doing is educating our children in a way whereas they will have confidence and a knowledge of their history. I do believe that history is very important. You don't find any other race of people who don't teach their children their history—except the Black child in the public school system.⁹

Independent neighborhood schools have adopted the education of African-American students as their mission. One administrator we interviewed in New Brunswick told us that in the early 1970s when his

Racially Homogeneous Enrollment

school was founded, there was a tremendous amount of concern about school failure among African American pupils in his city. During this time period the notion of African American genetic inferiority had been reintroduced to explain the academic achievement gap between Black and White pupils. The respondent indicated that his school was founded to provide African-American parents with educational options and added:

We needed to develop an alternative that would destroy the notion of genetic inferiority which was prevalent at the time. Many parents had inculcated inferiority complexes as a result of their public school experiences.

The statements of the parent and the administrator suggest that when the particular educational needs of African Americans are considered, the racial homogeneity of African-American independent neighborhood schools is due, in large part, to the specialization of these schools in addressing the needs of their communities.

Institutionalized Commitment to Social Change

The most striking characteristic of independent neighborhood schools and the one that separates them most markedly from other kinds of private schools is their almost universal commitment to social change. We asked the administrators of the four New Jersey schools to discuss the reasons behind the founding of their schools. They stated that they had observed that African-American students were being short-changed. These observations ultimately gave rise to intervention in the interests of African-American students. One school founder/director said:

In all of the cities that our students come from the public schools show deficiencies in grade level achievement. All African American students were behind their white peers. Blue-collar, working-class black students were even behind their middle-income black counterparts. They needed an option.

The administrator of a Newark school had this to say:

Our school was founded by a group of young adults interested in putting together an education and information organization that would serve people who are interested in gaining academic skills to enhance success in college. We started the school to make sure younger brothers and sisters were not shortchanged.

These contemporary schools were founded by people who sought to initiate change by establishing unique educational institutions. In many ways they belong to the same tradition of independent African-American education represented by the efforts of Absalom

Jones, Richard Allen, Booker T. Washington and Mary McLeod Bethune.

The concept of "neighborhood" with respect to these schools should be considered in the context of the non-geographic attributes of a "neighborhood" that denote closeness between individuals. For example, one independent neighborhood school in New Jersey is able to regularly attract students from up to 13 different school districts in several counties. It is also not unusual for students to cross the bridge connecting Trenton with suburban communities in Pennsylvania or for students from New York to attend a school in Newark or New Brunswick. The problems presented by the comparatively long distances that students travel to attend African-American independent neighborhood schools are offset by the efforts the schools make to create a neighborhood atmosphere.

Relatively small enrollments help to foster closeness within the student population and between students and faculty that is often described as family like in nature. Independent neighborhood schools are quite small compared to their public school counterparts. The table below shows average enrollments in a national sample of independent neighborhood schools.

Neighborhood School Atmosphere

Grades	Average Enrollment
Elementary	49
Middle School	48
Secondary	110

Table 7. Average Enrollments in Independent Neighborhood Schools

The elementary and secondary enrollments in the four New Jersey Schools we studied range from 31 to 317 students. It is the manageable size of the schools that permits the neighborhood philosophy to work. One Newark administrator told of the way unusual discipline problems are handled in his school:

The only actions we take against infractions is parent involvement. We have parent cooperation. If a student gets six complaints from any teacher the parents must come in. The parents then know what is going on.

In the other Newark school, the administrator told us that teachers are required to expand their involvement with the students in order to learn about the students' interest and aspirations. That school fosters an approach that teachers can fail to teach students, but students cannot fail. The administrator described the school's philosophy regarding teaching and learning in the following manner:

The teacher's job is to get the best out of students. If a child doesn't do homework or doesn't do in-class work

the teacher's job is to help the child not fail the child. It's a question of developing the child. [11118]

Parents and teachers meet face to face for a conference every 13 weeks in the Trenton school. Also, parents are required to attend monthly Parent-Teacher Council meetings, which always include education-oriented workshops conducted by community resource persons.

These examples reveal that neighborhood attributes are associated with building a feeling of ownership among the families the school serves; regular and open communication between school and home, and a close knit atmosphere among students and between students and faculty.

Operational Autonomy

Independent neighborhood schools tend to operate independent of government and larger organizational structures. Even the religious schools are operated as local initiatives by a single church or masjid.

Fiscally, tuition accounts for most of the operating funds available to independent neighborhood schools. We found nationally that tuition provides about 63 percent of the operating budget in religious schools and about 80 percent in secular schools. The remainder of the budget is funded primarily through fundraising activities that rely heavily on family involvement. Over 80 percent of the school administrators surveyed nationally indicated that their schools received no funds from government, corporations or foundations.

The non religious school in Newark is an exception to the typical funding pattern. It has developed relationships within the network of corporations and foundations in the Newark area that enable it to garner annually contributions of approximately \$100,000—an amount equal to roughly 10 percent of its annual budget. This administrator indicated that in many instances African-Americans within the organization structure of some corporations and foundations have seen to it that his school receives support. He also noted that about \$5,000 to \$6,000 in direct support is obtained from African-American businesses and organizations.

The religious school in the New Jersey sample had the lowest annual tuition rate (\$1,100) and funded the greatest portion of its budget from non-tuition sources (30 percent). The school's administrator, who is also the leader of a 400-member religious community, indicated that this religious community consistently supported the fundraising efforts of the school. He added that it was a common practice for some families, who had no children of their own in the school, to provide financial support for others who needed it.

In summary, African-American independent neighborhood schools are urban institutions established by committed educators. With limited resources, they have undertaken a mission to effectively educate African American youth in a culturally affirming, family-like environment. These schools are among the best examples of internally developed, imaginative approaches to collective problem solving in the African-American community. As such, they deserve consideration in educational policy deliberations whenever the interests of African-Americans are considered.

In the next section, we will present three examples of educational policy issues that have implications for African-Americans. These policy issues will be considered from two standpoints: 1) their actual or potential impact on African-American independent neighborhood schools, and 2) their capacity to effect positive change for African-American education.

The three policy issues discussed below are (a) initiatives to strengthen the teaching profession; (b) the "cultural literacy" movement, and (c) tuition vouchers. Each of these issues has been the subject of recent policy debates. New Jersey has already implemented initiatives to strengthen the teaching profession. The "cultural literacy" movement is gaining support as a means of strengthening elementary and secondary school curricula. Finally, even though Governor Thomas Kean has indicated he does not support tuition vouchers for private schools, the subject will undoubtedly receive attention while the Governor's current proposal to expand school choice is under study.

The interpretation of these policy issues will be enhanced by the consideration given to the perspectives of the administrators of independent neighborhood schools. This kind of broadening of perspective has not taken place until now because awareness of independent African-American schools was limited.

In an effort to strengthen the teaching profession by attracting better candidates, New Jersey moved several years ago to raise the minimum salary for beginning public school teachers to \$18,500. New Jersey is also one of several states to introduce alternative routes to teacher certification that allow individuals with at least a bachelor's degree to teach in the public schools without taking teacher preparatory courses. The independent neighborhood school administrators were asked about the effects of these initiatives on their schools. The minimum salary initiative appears to have had some indirect impact while alternate certification has had none.

As non-public schools, independent neighborhood schools are not required to pay their teachers the minimum salary the state sets for its teachers. However, because of their dependence upon tuition as the primary means of funding, independent neighborhood schools cannot afford to compete with the public school salary scale without placing their costs out of the reach of their constituents. As one administrator pointed out, the impact of the policy has been to reduce the number of candidates available to him:

We get only those teachers who can afford to work with us. Usually it's a member of our community or someone who may have income from other sources.

Commitment to teach African American children is an important criterion used to assess the suitability of teachers for positions in independent neighborhood schools. One administrator summed this up by stating:

Policy Issues

Strengthening the Teaching Profession

We don't even try to compete for teachers. It's not a contest in terms of salaries. What we look for is commitment. The standards and values that a person has acquired before even applying here.

In short, school administrators believe that they can train committed individuals to become good teachers.

One administrator explained that the state's minimum salary policy was making it especially difficult to find teachers with cultural backgrounds similar to those of his students:

There are always going to be some who want to teach in an independent school. The biggest question is whether we can attract Black and Hispanic teachers since fewer are going into teaching.

The need for certified teachers seems, at least in part, to be predicated upon the need to graduate students whose academic records have credibility. According to one administrator:

Our goal is to have all teachers certified. We do it for two reasons. First, we want quality, excellent education for our children. Second, we want to make sure we have everything the state requires. Even though we are a private institution and everything doesn't apply to us, we do it anyway. We've been operating 28 years and our students have never lacked anything that would get them admitted into another institution.

With regard to alternative teacher certification, the independent neighborhood school administrators are in agreement with the state. They concluded long ago that college teacher training was not sufficient to guarantee an individual would be a good teacher. One administrator remarked, "all of the teachers in the public schools are certified and look at the job they're doing." The administrators indicated, however, that they attempted to hire certified personnel when they could, but that they often hired individuals who were not certified and trained them within their respective programs.

We found that all of the schools encouraged their teachers to continue their professional development. Even with tuition support from their school, however, it was often difficult for teachers to do this. For example, three out of four full-time teachers at the Trenton school had second jobs, which precluded them from participating in evening courses at colleges in the area.

The state's minimum teacher salary provisions were intended to make teacher's salaries competitive with those of other professions requiring similar education. It is not clear whether the policy has succeeded in attracting people to the public schools from other professions. The policy has affected independent neighborhood schools by luring away prospective teachers, and in some cases experienced teachers, with higher salaries.

Cultural literacy refers to the background information that writers and speakers assume their listeners and readers possess. E D Hirsch, Jr., author of a best selling book on the subject, admits that his concept of cultural literacy favors Western European civilization. He writes:

Cultural Literacy

By accident of history, American cultural literacy has a bias toward English literate traditions. Short of revolutionary political upheaval, there is absolutely nothing that can be done about this.¹⁰

Hirsch proposes that a core curriculum be introduced in all U.S. schools to insure that all pupils are taught the essential components of these "English literate traditions."

Independent neighborhood school administrators feel that African-American students have never been taught about their own background. The statements that follow are illustrative:

Any useful knowledge is good. It's good to know Fillmore was the 13th president, but what did he do for us. I think he (Hirsch) is writing from his perspective and we need to know our own background.

Ethnicity and identity are a problem with us as a people. This is a unique problem for us. If we don't come together and deal with this, our people are going to be lost. We need to be taught this. What is our place in American society? We need our own cultural literacy specifically about African-American people.

The administrators' comments indicate a rejection of Hirsch's "English literate tradition" in favor of African-American cultural literacy. The interpretations given the "cultural literacy" movement should hold particular significance for African-Americans. The contributions of African to the world have not been properly included in the teaching of history. Hirsch's version of "cultural literacy" contributes to further misrepresentation of the development of human civilizations.

Much of the present national interest in elementary and secondary school choice is due to the Reagan administration's early proposals for an educational voucher system. Vouchers refer to arrangements by which parents receive funds (in the form of cash) to purchase the schooling of their choice outside the public sector.¹¹ Many African-American educational and political leaders strongly opposed these proposals because they believed that vouchers would result in a siphoning of funds away from urban public schools.

Tuition Vouchers

Vouchers would be detrimental for African-Americans, they argue, because 75 percent of the pupils in the nation's 32 largest school districts are cultural minorities, mainly African-American. Supporters take the counter argument that vouchers would give the consumers of education more power over the quality of schooling by creating a market situation wherein schools offering the best education would

theoretically receive more money as a function of supply and demand.

There was general support for some form of voucher system among the independent neighborhood school administrators we interviewed. There were generally two reasons given for this support (1) to establish a system of accountability in public education, and (2) to help families meet the costs of attending independent neighborhood schools.

Vouchers would enable parents who are citizens and taxpayers who can't afford to send their children here to do so. I am in favor of it. Not that I don't think administrators and teachers should be compensated, I just don't think it is fair the way it's distributed. I looked at the public school budget and found 83 percent of it going for administrators' and teachers' salaries and only 17 percent for services. I don't see teachers working in the classrooms. That old-fashioned work is not there. Vouchers might put more awareness of teaching into the profession instead of people just seeking a job.

In the long run I'm in favor of it. I think most of the public education system needs to be reordered and put in the hands of people who want to see improvements. We have to turn away people who can't pay tuition. Vouchers would help those who can't afford it.

Independent neighborhood schools would benefit from direct payments based on per pupil education costs. As a starting point, consideration should be given to changing the present textbook loan system to a direct grant awarded to independent schools by the state. The present system does not permit the purchase of teacher's editions and the student textbooks purchased are technically the property of the local public school district.

Conclusion: The Significance of School Choice

"No one tests the river with both feet." —Ashanti proverb

About 89 percent of the school age population in the United States attends public schools. Included in this figure is 95 percent of the African-American school-age population.¹² As the single largest state and local budgetary item, public education receives over 35 percent of all state and local government expenditures in the United States.¹³ The concept of a free, public education is firmly institutionalized and, though not specifically mentioned in the Constitution of the United States, it is regarded by many to be the truest representation of its democratic ideals.

The record indicates, however, that public schools have done poorly in the education of African-American pupils. Nationally, the dropout rate for African-Americans in high school is twice that of whites. African-American students are three times as likely as whites to be classified as educable mentally retarded, but only half as likely to be in a class for the gifted and talented.¹⁴ In New Jersey, the proportion of African-American students counted among public school dropouts exceeded the proportion of African-Americans in the student popula-

tion in 18 of 21 counties.¹⁵ Among special education classes in New Jersey, the proportion of African-American students classified as educable mentally retarded is twice their proportion within the public school population (38.6 percent to 18.6 percent).¹⁶ The same was true for pupils classified socially maladjusted.

African Americans have confronted the contradictions between democratic rhetoric and the promulgation of inequality by forcing the public schools to accept our children and demanding equitable treatment for them. Without doubt, access to public education is the right of African Americans. Its almost single-minded pursuit amounts to a very costly civil rights strategy. The major flaw in this strategy is that it has allowed for no alternative to meet the educational needs of our youth during the course of a struggle that has already reached over several generations.

For many, the notion of independent African American schools is viewed as a retrogression equivalent to voluntary segregation. As a matter of historical record, African-Americans began founding and operating independent schools for their own education as early as the 1790s. For the most part, however, the motivation to do so has been the lack of access to white-controlled schools caused by forced segregation. Although enthusiastically supported when no other options for schooling were available, history provides a number of examples of independent African-American schools that had to close their doors because of an exodus to public schools once barriers were removed by the burgeoning civil rights movement. One such example is the case of Rappahannock Industrial Academy, a Black Baptist school in Virginia. It operated for several decades but closed in 1947 due to declining enrollments only 13 years after the first school desegregation case was heard in the state's courts.¹⁷

By committing our youth to prevail or perish in schools that we do not control, African Americans have ignored ancestral wisdom and tested the river with both feet. Independent neighborhood schools offer valuable educational options that potentially may be able to provide a contingency against the mounting casualties in the continuing struggle to make public education live up to its expectations.

Perhaps the ultimate political challenge facing African-Americans in the next decade is to obtain some measure of control over the education of our youth. The builder of independent African-American elementary and secondary schools have accepted this challenge and, in doing so, have moved beyond social protest to embark on institution building as a strategy for educational empowerment.

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Separate and Still Unequal: The Status of Black Students in Special Education in New Jersey

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court held that separate but equal in American education, at least insofar as it was premised upon race, was unlawful.¹ Yet 34 years later, many black school children remain in educational settings that are not only separate, but also unequal, not, ostensibly, because of their race, but rather because of their status as students deemed in need of "special" education. Disproportionately labeled "educable mentally retarded" ("EMR") and emotionally disturbed ("ED") they are singled out to receive a "special" education different from that which their white peers receive in regular classrooms.

Unfortunately, "special" more often than not means inferior as well as different. In fact, being identified as in need of special education will likely assure a child a one way, no-return passage to a segregated education in which he will receive, and will be expected to achieve, very little academically. And the probability is great that he will exit the educational system, either prematurely or as scheduled, ill-prepared to lead an independent, productive life. All this, plus the stigma that envelopes special education students, imposes a burden upon many black students that is as consequential today as racial segregation was 34 years ago.

Arguably, the experience of black children in special education is not unique.² But because of a confluence of factors—primarily those of race, culture and socioeconomic status—it is an experience that a black student is more likely than his white counterpart to have. On both the state and national level there is an overrepresentation of black students in special education, particularly in the most stigmatizing classification categories.

This paper focuses on the status of black students in special education in New Jersey. First, it discusses the legislative mandate for special education and the reality of that mandate for many children with handicaps. It then examines the data for two of the most stigmatizing classification categories—educable mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed—in selected urban and non-urban school districts and counties; discusses New Jersey's proposed revision of special education with its centerpiece of declassification; and sets forth some current and future policy implications for the State of New Jersey.

Passage by Congress of the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act*, Pub. L. 94-142, in 1975 demarcates the present era in special education. In the ten years preceding 1975, a series of federal and state statutes and several major court decisions recognized

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either directly or indirectly the educational rights of children with handicaps.³ But it was Pub. L. 94-142⁴ that not only established the basic underpinnings and set the direction for special education, but also served as the catalyst for change at the state and local levels. It "codified a baseline of rights, procedures, and guidelines for intergovernmental relationships that have defined public policy for children and youth with disabilities in educational services and, to some extent, in other social services as well. While it is not wholly unambiguous, Pub. L. 94-142 is the clearest expression by government of the rights and expectations of persons with disabilities."⁵

Pub. L. 94-142 addresses both the individual rights of handicapped students and the systemic problems they have encountered because of the refusal or failure of the public school system to accept them. Its basic requirements are as follows:

All school-age children and youth, no matter how severe their handicaps, must be provided a free (no cost to parents), appropriate (corresponding to individual abilities and needs) public education.

The program must be defined in the most normal or "least restrictive" environment feasible, to the greatest possible extent in the company of nonhandicapped peers.

Students and their parents are guaranteed a variety of legal protections, including nondiscriminatory evaluation of the student, parent involvement in the individualized education program (IEP) process, permission for initial evaluation, and prior notice of any changes in identification, evaluation, program, or placement; confidentiality of student records; and the right to call for a due process hearing if necessary to resolve disputes with the school.⁶

Also included in Pub. L. 94-142's mandate is an expansive array of supportive (related) services to enable the handicapped child to benefit from, or at least participate in, an educational program. Despite federal funding for implementation of Pub. L. 94-142, state and local agencies have primary responsibility for carrying out its provisions. The state educational agency, regardless of how many other agencies and sources of funding are involved, has ultimate responsibility for assuring that all handicapped children within the state receive a free and appropriate education.

A second federal statute, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, also has had a significant impact upon the education of handicapped children. A broad civil rights law, it prohibits discrimination against persons with handicaps, solely because of their handicaps, by any programs or agencies receiving federal funds, including schools. Unlike Pub. L. 94-142, which is a federal grant program, Section 504 provides no funding.

New Jersey's special education laws basically mirror federal law. The laws and supporting regulations are set forth at N.J.S.A.

18A:46-1 *et seq.*, and N.J.A.C. 6:28-1 *et seq.*, respectively.

The promise of Pub. L. 94-142 was equal access and equal educational opportunity for children with handicaps.⁷ But for many children with handicapping conditions, the reality has been less. Policy implementation at the local level in many instances has diverged considerably from the original intent of the law. The "quiet revolution" in special education policy⁸ that Pub. L. 94-142 ushered in, like its progenitor, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, promised more than it has been able to deliver.

To be sure, the impact of Pub. L. 94-142 has been immense. In "Beyond Special Education: Toward a Quality System for All Students," the authors discuss its tremendous impact.

Over six hundred and fifty thousand more students are served now than when the law was enacted. During the 1985-86 school year, somewhat over 4.37 million students received services under the provisions of PL 94-142. This comprised approximately 11 percent of the total public school enrollment (a slight drop from the previous year), . . . Generally educators believe that few, if any, students needing services have not been identified.

There has been a substantial increase in the funds devoted to special education, from \$100 million in FY 1976 to \$1.64 billion in FY 1985, for PL 94-142.

However, the promised federal contribution (40 percent of the average per pupil cost of 1982) has never been met. Current figures are around 8.5 percent, with states (54 percent) and local government (37 percent) providing the difference.

While there are some exceptions, such as students in prisons, from migrant families, and in some institutional settings, for the most part location of the student does not seem to be a factor in the availability of services. . . . With New Mexico's submission of a state plan in August, 1984, all fifty states are presently participating under PL 94-142.⁹

But the gloss of accomplishments cannot conceal the problems fermenting beneath the surface of Pub. L. 94-142's policies—problems primarily having to do with the referral, evaluation and placement of students, the quality of special education programming and the economics of special education. For blacks and other minorities much that is wrong stems from the educational system's inability to respond appropriately to and educate minority children from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds. Unfortunately, special education provides a ready arena for schools legitimately to propagate institutional biases and prejudices.

Sex, age, race ethnicity, socio-economic status, and even physical attractiveness, are all factors associated with who gets referred,

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evaluated, and placed in special education.¹⁰ An "ethnocentrism—the belief that the customs and values and language of one's own group are superior to those of other groups and are "right" and "good" standards by which the behavior of all persons ought to be measured"¹¹—characteristic of so many schools—results in (a) teacher over-identification and over-referral of minority children to special education; (b) evaluation procedures that discriminate against children not from the modal (white) background, and (c) the disproportionate placement of minority children in special education, particularly the EMR and ED classifications.¹²

"Aberrant" (different from the school norm) academic performance or behavior, which almost always is attributed to some failing of the student and not of the teacher or educational system, triggers the referral of many minority students who, once referred, will in most instances be found in need of special education.¹³ A teacher's description of a child's problem not only significantly influences the judgment of subsequent support service personnel who may evaluate the child, but also may persist despite evidence disputing its accuracy. Special education diagnostic testing and labeling practices are used to verify a teacher's judgment of student deviance to such a degree that some have characterized the process as "referral-to-placement" rather than simply "referral."¹⁴ Thus, for the student involved, a teacher's referral often is tantamount to a conclusion that the student needs services.

The entire referral process continues to be controversial. The fact that most referrals result in placement poses again the question asked during consideration of Pub. L. 94-142 and raised by advocacy groups since then: Does special education serve as a convenient institutional mechanism to sort unwanted students from the mainstream of education?¹⁵

To unspoken beliefs about the inherent inferiority of some groups, standardized tests offer the confirming imprimatur of science.¹⁶ And the use of multiple criteria, as required by Pub. L. 94-142, although presumably producing more accurate assessments, may simply enshroud the whole referral, evaluation, and placement process in multiple layers of bias and discrimination. How many parents have the audacity to challenge not only teacher and child study team judgments, but also multiple tests and observation tools? Few of the minority parents whose children are caught in the web of special education do.

The classification issue that cannot be ignored is the well-documented increase in the number of children classified as learning disabled ("LD")¹⁷, a phenomenon that in large part has resulted from battles waged by civil rights advocates who objected to the inappropriate and discriminatory classification of blacks and other minorities as mentally retarded. This increase, and the accompanying decrease in those labeled mentally retarded, seemingly are related. The U.S. Department of Education stated that, "these decreases in the number of children classified as mentally retarded are the result of an increasing sensitivity to the negative features of the label itself and to the reaction on the part of local schools systems to allegations of racial and

ethnic bias as a result of the use of discriminatory and culturally biased testing procedures.¹⁸ It may be more a case of "classification plea bargaining,"¹⁹ or simply the shifting of old problems from the less acceptable guise of mental retardation to the more acceptable but less obvious LD guise.

Now that there is a LD category, often with extremely ambiguous and diffuse eligibility requirements, the chances are great that the aberrant learner will be screened quickly into an LD class rather than viewed in terms of what remedial experiences might be provided in the regular setting.

Thus, the LD placement is often the easiest alternative for a school, even when there is no clear indication of a handicapping condition. In this way, it is contended, a student's problem is at least temporarily alleviated in that the school has "done something" for the child. Actually, of course, the school may have alleviated its own internal stress without helping the child at all. Placement in a convenient LD class effectively removes much of the responsibility of general education for a child's problem, and with the lowered expectations that come with special class placement there is often significantly less progress.²⁰

New Jersey's LD category appears to be its "perceptually impaired" classification, which is defined as "a specific learning disability manifested in a disorder in understanding and learning, which affects the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell and/or compute to the extent that special education is necessary for achievement in an educational program."²¹ In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students in this category and it is now by far the largest classification category in the State and in many school districts.²²

Integration, mainstreaming and appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE) variously express a principle of Pub. L. 94-142 that remains unfulfilled for many handicapped children, especially those labeled mentally retarded. Despite growing evidence that segregated special education programs are less beneficial than the integration or mainstreaming of handicapped children in regular classes, the percent of children in general education and separate classes has remained essentially the same since 1976-77.²³ This is not so for the mentally retarded, however, whose placement in separate classes and separate schools has actually increased.²⁴

In its Ninth Annual Report to Congress in 1987, the U.S. Department of Education noted that "based on site visits by . . . monitoring teams, virtually every State had significant problems in meeting LRE responsibilities. In some States, problems are Statewide and evidence leads to the conclusion that States have neither established nor implemented procedures to ensure that the removal of

children who are handicapped from the regular educational environment is justified."²⁵

It is not just a question of where services are provided. What is provided and the quality of those services are also at issue, especially for the mildly and moderately retarded. When special education services are separate or segregated, quality has been found to suffer

The quality of education has been found to suffer substantially when children are removed from the regular classroom because special education programming bears little relationship to the real cause of the student's performance problem and are accompanied by inconsistent instructional efforts, inferior programming, and diversion from academic learning, as well as lowered teacher expectations and damage to school and peer relationships.²⁶

Questions are currently being raised about the value and need for highly specialized comprehensive programs in a separate special education tract and the effectiveness of the specialized methodologies and instructional areas used in special education in raising academic performance.²⁷

New Jersey: The Statistical Data

Depending upon the level and specificity of the statistical data, diametrically opposite conclusions can be reached about the status differential between blacks and whites in special education in New Jersey. Those wanting to de-emphasize any difference may find solace in the overall comparison between blacks and whites in special education generally. Statewide there appears to be no statistically significant evidence of overrepresentation of blacks in special education. Table 8 below shows that for the 1986-1987 school year, black student enrollment (206,416) was 18.6 percent of the total student enrollment of 1,107,467, while the black handicapped student enrollment (31,439) was 20.9 percent of the total handicapped student enrollment, for an incident rate (IR) of 15.2.²⁸ Comparable figures for white students were 67.9 percent (751,894), 68.1 percent (102,466), and 13.6. The IR for all students was 13.6. Thus, the proportion and incidence of blacks in special education exceeded that for both white students and for all students, but the differences are not remarkable.

Table 8. *State Enrollment of Black and White Students in Special Education: 1986-1987*

	Pub. Schl. Enr.	% Total	Hand. Stud. Enr.	% Hand. Enr	IR
Total	1,107,467	0.	150,573	0.	13.6
Black	206,416	18.6	31,439	20.9	15.2
White	751,894	67.9	102,466	68.1	13.6

	Total Enr	Hand. Stud. Enr	Hand. Stud. Enr %	Black Stud. Enr	Black Stud. Enr %	Black Hand. Enr	Black% Hand. Enr	Black IR	White Stud. Enr	White Stud. Enr %	White Hand. Enr	White % Hand. Enr	White IR
Atlantic	31025	4942	15.93	8179	26.36	1484	29.82	17.90	19499	62.85	2894	58.66	14.84
Burlington	61537	8261	13.42	11456	18.62	1699	20.57	14.83	47036	76.44	8209	75.16	13.20
Camden	79833	10801	13.53	18116	22.69	2478	22.94	13.68	52082	65.24	7267	67.28	14.95
Cumberland	25007	3629	14.51	8164	24.65	1074	29.59	17.42	14104	56.40	11856	51.14	13.16
Essex	123851	28689	23.15	61848	49.94	12404	43.28	20.06	41842	33.78	6271	21.87	14.99
Hudson	68449	8354	31.20	14435	21.09	1111	27.33	15.83	21854	31.93	3073	36.78	14.08
Mercer	44052	6512	14.78	12619	28.65	2355	36.18	18.66	28877	61.01	3621	55.61	13.47
Monmouth	83199	11633	13.86	10430	12.54	1644	14.25	15.78	67810	81.50	9286	80.52	13.70
Passaic	66139	8674	13.11	14084	21.19	1981	22.84	14.07	33869	51.21	5706	65.78	16.85
Salem	11978	1554	12.97	2586	21.42	410	26.38	15.98	8033	75.41	1098	70.66	12.16
Union	66131	9561	14.46	18619	28.15	3118	32.611	6.75	31881	55.32	6274	55.16	14.42

The disproportionate representation of blacks begins to emerge, however, at the county level, and is clearly evident when the data for individual school districts and specific classifications are examined. Table 9 illustrates New Jersey counties with a black student enrollment of 12 percent or more, while Tables 10, 11, and 12 compare the more revealing statistics on black and white enrollments in two of the most stigmatizing special education classifications, educable (mildly) mentally retarded (EMR) and emotionally disturbed (ED), at the state, county and local levels.

Although the overrepresentation of blacks is evident in both the EMR and ED classifications,³⁰ the differential between blacks and whites is most dramatic in the former. For example, blacks were only 18.6 percent of the total statewide student enrollment, yet comprised 36.59 percent of the EMR enrollment and had an EMR incident rate of .65. In contrast, whites were 67.89 percent of the total statewide student enrollment, yet comprised just 46.7 percent of the EMR enrollment and had an incident rate of only .23. (See Table 10 below.)

Thus, the statewide EMR incident rate for blacks is almost three times (2.8 times) that of whites. And although the white student enrollment of 751,894 was 3.6 times the black student enrollment of 206,416, the white EMR enrollment of 1724 was only 1.2 times the black EMR enrollment of 1351. Moreover, the black EMR incident rate of .65 is almost twice the overall state EMR incident rate of .33 for all racial/ethnic groups.

Comparable statistics for the ED classification were 29.74 percent and 1.93 for blacks, and 60.87 percent and 1.08 for whites. Again the incident rate for blacks exceeds not only that for whites, but also that for the state (1.2) overall.

New Jersey's EMR and ED classification data for blacks and whites is in keeping with national data. Surveys in 1978 and 1980 revealed that nationally the "proportion of blacks in programs for the mentally retarded was two-to-three times greater, and the proportion in programs for emotionally disturbed greater by two-thirds to three-quarters. On the other hand, the proportion of black pupils in programs

Table 9. Enrollment of Black and White Students in Special Education in Eleven Counties with Black Student Enrollment of at least 12 Percent

	Total Enr	Total Black Enr	Black % Enr	Total White Enr	White % Enr	Total EMR	Number Black EMR	Black % Total EMR	Black EMR IR	Number White EMR	White % Total EMR	White EMR IR
State												
All Schools	110746	206416	18.64	751894	67.89	3692	1351	36.59	0.65	1724	46.7	0.23
						Total ED	Number Black ED	Black % Total ED	Black ED IR	Number White ED	White % Total ED	White ED IR
						13382	3980	29.74	1.93	8145	60.87	1.08

Table 10 1986-87 ENR and ED Enrollment Data for Black and White Students for State of New Jersey

for the gifted was lower by 40-to-50 percent than the comparable proportion of white students.³³

At the county level, the black EMR incident rate in the eleven counties with at least a 12 percent black student enrollment ranged from 1.7 (Burlington County) to 6 (Camden County) times that of whites. All but two counties—Burlington and Union—have black EMR incident rates that exceed the .33 state rate, while only two counties have white EMR rates that exceed the state rate. Three counties—Cumberland, Hudson and Salem—have black EMR rates that are over three times the state rate, with Cumberland leading the way with a black EMR rate that is an astounding 578 times the overall state rate. (See Table 4 below.)

Except for Passaic County, where the incident rate for whites exceeds that for blacks, the overrepresentation of blacks continues in the ED classification at 1.1 to 2.1 times the incident rate for whites. (See Table 4 below.)

Among individual school districts, the percentage and incidence of blacks and whites in both the EMR and ED classification varies widely. Atlantic City (.84), Camden (.90), Newark (.86), Jersey City (1.12), Asbury Park City (1.32), Long Branch City (.90), Burlington Township (.83), Bridgeton (3.02), Cumberland Regional (2.71), Carney's Point (1.32), Salem City (1.54), and Franklin Township (.83), all have black EMR rates that exceed the state rate of .33. And relative to whites, Atlantic City (3x), Burlington City (3.7x), Newark (2.9x), Long Branch City (3x), Burlington Township (9.2x), Lower Camden County Regional (4.8x), Bridgeton (2.6x), Cumberland Regional (4.6x), Salem City (10.2x) and Franklin Township (5.2x) have rates that are at least 2.5 times that for whites in each of those districts.

Only eight districts among the 55 included in Table 5 have black ED rates that are less than the 1.2 overall state rate, Morris School District, with its rate of 5.2 has the highest black ED rate of the included districts, and Pleasantville City at .46, the lowest.

Montclair, Newark, Paulsboro, Asbury Park City and Paterson have black ED rates at least 2 times the white ED rate in those districts. And in a reversal of the expected, the cities of Orange and Plainfield have white ED rates that are almost double (Orange), or more than

County	Total Enr	Total Black Enr	Black Enr %	Total White Enr	White Enr %	Total EMR	No Black EMR	Black %Total EMR	Black EMR	No. White EMR	White %Total EMR	White EMR
Atlantic	31025	8179	26.36	19499	62.85	110	54	49.09	0.66	42	38.18	0.21
Burlington	61537	11456	18.62	47036	76.44	100	27	27.00	0.24	68	68.00	0.14
Camden	79833	18116	22.69	52082	65.24	286	121	42.31	0.67	58	20.28	0.11
Cumberland	25007	6164	24.65	14104	56.40	258	118	45.74	1.91	70	27.13	0.50
Essex	123651	61848	49.94	41842	33.78	584	399	68.32	0.65	120	20.55	0.29
Hudson	68449	14435	21.09	21854	31.93	417	167	40.05	1.16	103	24.70	0.47
Mercer	44052	12619	28.65	28877	61.01	126	56	44.44	0.44	44	34.92	0.15
Monmouth	83199	10430	12.54	67810	81.50	199	44	22.11	0.42	138	69.35	0.20
Passaic	66139	14084	21.29	33869	51.21	321	136	42.37	0.97	78	24.30	0.23
Salem	11978	2566	21.42	9033	75.41	56	28	50.00	1.09	25	44.64	0.28
Union	66131	18619	28.15	36581	55.32	136	57	41.91	0.31	54	39.71	0.15

	Total ED	No. Black ED	Black %Total ED	Black ED	No. White ED	White %Total ED	White ED
Atlantic	238	82	34.45	1.00	125	52.52	0.64
Burlington	881	264	29.97	2.30	596	67.65	1.27
Camden	608	158	25.99	0.87	402	66.12	0.77
Cumberland	369	136	36.86	2.21	186	44.99	1.18
Essex	1618	1268	69.75	2.05	468	25.74	1.12
Hudson	880	289	32.84	2.00	284	32.27	1.30
Mercer	683	313	45.83	2.48	313	46.56	1.18
Monmouth	735	141	19.18	1.35	562	76.46	0.83
Passaic	673	108	16.05	0.77	465	69.095	1.37
Salem	132	32	24.24	1.25	97	73.48	1.07
Union	1167	496	42.50	2.66	589	50.47	1.51

double (Plainfield), the black rate. Table 5 details EMR and ED enrollment data for blacks and whites in 55 urban and non urban school districts, each with a total enrollment of at least 1,000 and a black student enrollment of at least 20 percent.

The overrepresentation of blacks in special education that appears in the statistical data for the State of New Jersey is neither new nor recent and is in keeping with national trends.³²

Currently underway in the State of New Jersey is a major revision of special education. This *Plan to Revise Special Education in New Jersey* (The Plan) is an outgrowth of a review of special education services in New Jersey that began in 1982.

In 1985, in a report entitled *The Turning Point: New Directions in Special Education*, the New Jersey Special Education Study Commission presented finding and recommendations to the State Board of Education that culminated in development of The Plan by the Department of Education's Division of Special Education.

According to Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman, "The

Table 11 1986-87 ENR and ED Enrollment Data for Black and White Students for Counties with Black Student Enrollment of at least 12%

The Plan to Revise Special Education in New Jersey

Table 12. 1986-1987 Enrollment Data for Black and White Students for Selected Urban School Districts (20% or More Black Student Enrollment, Total Enrollment Over 1,000)

School District	Total Enr	Total Black Enr	Black Enr %	Total White Enr	White Enr %	Total EMR	No. Black EMR	Black % Total EMR	Black EMR IR	No. White EMR	White % Total EMR	White EMR IR	Total ED	No. Black ED	Black % Total ED	Black ED IR	No. White ED	White % Total ED	White ED IR
Atlantic County																			
Atlantic City	6461	4274	66.15	1053	16.30	62	36	69.23	0.84	4	7.69	0.38	80	54	67.50	1.26	17	21.25	1.61
Pleasantville City	2285	1768	77.62	212	9.36	16	10	62.50	0.57	6	31.25	2.36	11	8	72.73	0.46	1	9.09	0.47
Burlington County																			
Burlington City	1788	591	33.06	1160	64.88	3	2	66.67	0.34	1	33.33	0.90	14	6	42.86	1.02	8	57.14	0.69
Mount Holly Twp.	1193	314	26.32	725	60.77	7	1	14.29	0.32	4	57.14	0.55	22	4	18.18	1.27	13	68.09	1.79
Willingboro Twp.	6798	4502	66.23	1903	27.99	14	12	85.71	0.27	2	14.29	0.11	190	145	76.32	3.22	40	21.06	2.10
Camden County																			
Camden City	19094	11704	61.30	880	4.61	176	106	59.66	0.90	8	4.56	0.91	155	106	68.39	0.91	15	9.68	1.70
Lindenwald Boro	1162	269	23.15	818	70.40							9	2	22.22	0.74	7	77.78	0.86	
Pennsauken Twp.	4786	995	20.78	3508	73.20	5				1	20.00	0.03	14	2	14.29	0.20	12	85.71	0.34
Essex County																			
East Orange	11956	11646	97.40	31	0.26	41	41	100.00	0.35		0.00	0.00	172	172	100.00	1.48		0.00	0.00
Irvine	8909	6912	77.58	573	6.43	28	23	82.14	0.33	1	3.57	0.17	114	93	81.58	1.35	10	8.77	1.75
Mountclair Town	5247	2276	43.38	2681	51.10	8	5	62.50	0.22	3	37.50	0.11	58	45	77.59	1.98	11	18.97	0.41
Newark City	62937	34250	54.42	4843	9.15	364	295	81.04	0.86	14	3.85	0.29	1021	768	75.22	2.24	53	5.19	1.09
City of Orange Twp.	3976	3473	87.37	141	3.55	20	18	90.00	0.52	2	10.00	1.42	144	133	92.36	3.83	9	6.25	6.38
Gloucester County																			
Clayton Boro	1227	243	19.80	925	75.39	10	5	50.00	1.77	6	50.00	0.64	7	1	14.29	0.95	6	85.71	0.65
Glaxboro	2106	674	31.97	1370	64.99	7	2	28.57	0.30	5	71.43	0.36	44	17	38.64	2.52	28	59.09	1.90
Paulsboro	1384	442	31.94	915	68.11	7	3	42.86	0.68	4	57.14	0.44	20	17	85.00	3.85	3	15.00	0.33
Hudson County																			
Jersey City	29872	13189	44.15	4413	14.77	251	149	68.96	1.12	24	9.56	0.54	435	254	68.39	1.93	74	17.01	1.68
Mercer County																			
Ewing Twp.	3416	933	27.31	2335	68.35	5	1	20.00	0.11	4	80.00	0.17	29	9	31.03	0.96	19	65.52	0.81
Trenton City	13598	9478	69.70	1618	11.90	80	60	62.50	0.53	10	12.50	0.62	340	265	77.94	2.80	47	13.82	2.80
Middlesex County																			
New Brunswick	3986	2472	62.02	349	8.76	15	10	66.67	0.40	1	6.67	0.29	100	79	79.00	3.20	0	10.00	2.87
Piscataway Twp.	6591	1367	20.74	3338	50.65	3				2	66.67	0.06	70	20	28.57	1.47	50	71.43	1.50
Monmouth County																			
Asbury Park City	2995	2345	78.30	313	10.45	36	31	86.11	1.32	3	8.33	0.96	61	46	90.20	1.96	3	5.88	0.96
Freehold Boro	1023	3533	36.49	1647	41.39	26	13	50.00	0.90	6	19.23	0.30	60	27	45.00	1.86	20	33.33	0.93
Long Branch City	3979	1452	36.49	1647	41.39	26	13	50.00	0.90	6	19.23	0.30	60	27	45.00	1.86	20	33.33	0.93
Monmouth Reg HS	1036	252	24.32	893	86.89	2	1	50.00	0.40	1	50.00	0.14	13	2	15.38	0.79	11	84.62	1.69
Neptune Twp.	4190	2345	56.07	1848	39.33	14	10	71.43	0.43	1	7.14	0.06	84	67	67.86	2.43	24	28.57	1.46
Red Bank Reg HS	1116	239	21.42	826	74.01	2	1	50.00	0.42	1	50.00	0.12	17	12	70.59	5.02	5	29.41	0.61
Panama County																			
Passaic City	8978	2145	23.90	899	10.02	66	21	37.50	0.98	6	10.71	0.67	94	34	36.17	1.59	26	27.66	2.89
Patterson City	23218	10846	46.71	2446	10.53	176	98	55.68	0.90	13	7.39	0.63	131	58	44.27	0.53	29	22.14	1.19
Union County																			
Elizabeth City	15488	4932	31.84	3607	23.29	36	16	44.44	0.32	5	13.89	0.14	275	127	46.18	2.58	90	32.73	2.50
Hillside	2743	1669	60.85	874	24.57	7	3	42.86	0.18	3	42.86	0.45	38	23	60.53	1.38	13	34.21	1.93
Linden City	4287	1676	36.78	2398	56.94	12	4	33.33	0.25	7	58.33	0.29	93	47	50.54	2.98	45	48.39	1.83
Plainfield City	7201	5964	82.82	251	3.49	33	27	81.82	0.45	2	6.06	0.80	149	131	87.92	2.20	13	8.72	5.18
Rahway City	3195	991	31.02	1924	60.22	4		0.00	0.00	3	75.00	0.16	121	43	35.54	4.14	69	57.02	2.69
Roselle Boro	2267	1372	60.79	870	29.69	6	4	66.67	0.29	1	16.67	0.16	63	43	68.25	1.13	18	28.67	2.89

Table 12 (cont.) 1986 EMR and ED Enrollment Data for Black and White Students for Selected Non-Urban School Districts (20% or More Black Enrollment (Total Enrollment Over 1,000))

School District	Total Enr	Total Black Enr	Black Enr %	Total White Enr	White Enr %	Total EMR	No. Black IR	Black % Total EMR Enr	Black EMR IR	No. White EMR	White % Total EMR Enr	White EMR IR	Total ED	No. Black ED	Black % Total ED Enr	Black ED Prev	No. White ED	White % Total ED Enr	White ED Prev
Bergen County																			
Englewood City	2506	1686	67.31	266	10.62	3	3	100.00	0.18	0	0.00	0.00	86	55	83.33	3.26	9	13.64	8.88
Hackensack City	3885	1237	31.84	1877	48.31	0			0.00			0.00	96	63	65.63	6.09	28	29.17	1.49
Teaneck Twp.	4409	1629	36.96	2169	48.97	2	2	100.00	0.12		0.00	0.00	38	16	42.11	0.98	19	50.00	0.88
Burlington County																			
Burlington Twp.	1606	484	30.14	1059	65.94	5	4	80.00	0.83	1	20.00	0.09	38	16	42.11	3.31	22	57.89	2.08
North Hanover Twp.	1645	351	21.34	1167	70.94	3				3	100.00	0.26	2	2	100.00	0.67			
Peshberton Twp.	7671	2281	29.74	4475	58.34	20	5	25.00	0.22	14	70.00	0.31	95	29	30.53	1.27	65	68.42	1.45
Camden County																			
Lower Camden Co. R	5106	1250	24.48	3724	72.93	6	3	50.00	0.24	2	33.33	0.05	67	19	28.36	1.52	47	70.15	1.28
Winslow Twp.	2636	708	26.86	1811	68.70	1		0.00	0.00	1	100.00	0.08	14	5	35.71	0.71	9	64.29	0.50
Cape May County																			
Wildwood City	1003	267	26.62	678	67.60	1	1	100.00	0.37		0.00	0.00	32	9	28.13	3.37	17	53.13	2.51
Essex County																			
Bridgeton	3775	2086	55.26	1244	32.95	89	63	70.79	3.02	14	15.73	1.13	66	50	75.76	2.40	11	16.67	0.88
Cumberland Reg.	1555	442	28.42	1038	66.75	18	12	66.67	2.71	6	33.33	0.58	35	22	62.86	4.98	13	37.14	1.25
Dorfield Twp.	321	83	25.86	216	67.29				0.00			0.00	3	1	33.33	1.20	1	33.33	0.46
U. Dorfield Twp.	1013	232	22.90	716	70.68								18	7	38.89	3.02	10	55.56	1.40
Gloucester County																			
Woodbury City	1589	462	30.33	1092	68.72	3	1	33.33	0.21	2	66.67	0.18	28	11	39.29	2.28	17	60.71	1.56
Morris County																			
Morris School Dist.	4311	1054	24.45	2914	67.59	6	2	33.33	0.19	4	66.67	0.14	90	55	61.11	5.22	34	37.78	1.17
Ocean County																			
Lakewood Twp.	5260	1873	31.81	2457	47.28	18	7	38.89	0.42	5	27.78	0.20	61	27	44.26	1.61	26	42.62	1.05
Salem County																			
Penns Grove	2478	832	33.60	1494	60.34	33	11	33.33	1.32	19	57.58	1.27	19	7	36.84	0.84	12	63.16	0.80
Carney's Point	1689	972	57.55	651	38.54	16	15	93.75	1.54	1	6.25	0.15	14	12	86.71	1.23	2	14.29	0.31
Somerset County																			
Franklin Twp.	4106	1815	44.20	1930	47.00	19	15	78.96	0.83	3	15.79	0.16	117	70	59.83	3.86	41	35.04	2.12

Plan is designed to improve the special education delivery system through modifications in programs and services, funding and teacher training.²⁰ Its stated goals are to:

- Reduce the number of pupils who must be labeled "handicapped" in order to receive state-funded remedial programs by providing them with appropriate assistance through the general or regular educational programs offered by local school districts.
- Establish a school resource committee in each school building to assist pupils with educational difficulties by using the resources available within the general education program
- More clearly delineate levels of pupil need as, those in need of general education with intervention, those in need of combined regular/special education; and those in need of clearly labeled, full-time special education programs.
- Classify pupils based on program need into three categories: Eligible for Related Services, Eligible for a Part-Time Special Education Program, Eligible for a Full-Time Special Education Program.
- Focus pupil evaluation procedures on instructional needs rather than on diagnostic categories or classifications.
- Implement the concept of "greater need requires greater services" and eliminate excessive testing for those having less need and for whom greater services are not required.
- Emphasize the role of the child study team in providing services to the general education population and programs.
- Clearly define and describe special education programs and services by establishing eligibility criteria.
- Increase both regular and special education teaching staff competence through improved in-service and preservice
- Provide a current year, dedicated (state funds provided for special education must be expended on special education) funding system based on an approved local district special education program plan and budget as

opposed to the current funding system, which is based upon the number of pupils classified.³⁴

Ten pilot projects in thirteen school districts³⁵ will serve as the implementing vehicles for The Plan. Each will be carried out during the 1988-89 school years, after which the State expects to make decisions regarding statewide implementation.³⁶ Awaiting final approval in 1988 are proposed new rules within N.J.A.C. 6:28, the chapter in the Administrative Code governing special education, for the thirteen districts implementing The Plan.

Laudable as the goals and promises contained in The Plan and proposed new rules may be, especially those that eliminate stigmatizing labels and categories, The Plan's potential impact on black students in special education is questionable. Unless The Plan and its implementing rules adequately address the problems of discrimination and bias in teacher perceptions, testing and evaluation procedures, and classification and placement decisions, the overrepresentation of blacks in special education will continue. Different and incomprehensible professional jargon and terminology will only temporarily mask the disproportionate number of black students who are warehoused in special education and will not change the end result. The rules will have changed, but the game will be the same.

A close analysis of both The Plan and the proposed new rules raises a number of red flags, most of which relate to The Plan's declassification scheme. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.2(a) describes the school resource committee that will serve as the first point of contact for the student experiencing learning problems.

All pilot district boards of education shall establish at least one school resource committee in each of its regular schools. The school resource committee is a standing committee whose purpose it is to assist teachers with strategies for educating non-handicapped pupils with learning and/or behavior problems in regular education . . .

The assistance students receive at this level will include: remedial instruction programs; changes in instructional materials, changes in teaching strategies; and counseling.³⁷

Significantly for black students, however, The Plan and proposed rules provide an escape for the school. The explanation for N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.2A(d), which allows for referral of pupils to the child study team to determine eligibility for special services and/or related services when the recommendations of the school resource committee are ineffective, is stated as follows:

When a pupil's problems are such that the school resource committee is unable to provide appropriate assistance through the general education program, the

pupil will be recommended for referral to the child study team for evaluation to determine the need for more specialized programs and/or services. *This may occur after general education interventions have been tried and found to be unsuccessful or earlier when it is apparent that specialized programs and/or services are necessary and general education would not be appropriate.* (emphasis added)³⁸

Moreover, a rather innocuous provision in proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.5(a) allows the school to circumvent the school resource committee entirely. "School resource committee intervention is not required for a pupil whose education problems are such that direct referral to the child study team can be supported."

Again, the school will be able to define the problem as the student and his disabilities rather than the school and its ability to meet its needs.³⁹ Under both the present and revised systems, the black student with his problems and special needs, perceived as different and perhaps as inferior because of his race, culture, and socioeconomic status, is more likely to be routed to a special but separate education,⁴⁰ with little hope of returning to regular education.

As previously noted, New Jersey's Revised Plan commendably eliminates the stigmatizing label and categories of the present system of special education.⁴¹ Instead, students will be categorized according to the following program options:

Eligible for related services, the program options for pupils needed a specialized service that is not generally provided but is necessary for the student to access or benefit from his education program; included ~~are~~ services such as counseling for the student and his parents, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, speech and language services and transportation;

Eligible for part-time special education, a program option for regular education students with significant learning problems who, because of their need for regularly scheduled special instruction to benefit from the general education program, will receive Resource Room instruction to supplement or replace their regular program for up to one-half of their instructional day; and

Eligible for full-time special education, a program option for students determined to have educational needs so great that placement in a full-time special education program for more than half the day is required and no other program is deemed appropriate.⁴²

The proposed rules state that "students should not be eligible for special education solely for cultural or linguistic factors, poor attendance, substance abuse, poor school performance or disciplinary reasons."⁴³ But a school need not resort to such obviously biased and inappropriate criteria to achieve the same result. Eligibility criteria defined in terms of domains and areas of educational impact,⁴⁴ despite the sophisticated jargon, are likely to produce the same classification differential between black and white students as currently exist.

The criteria for at least three of the domains and two of the educational impact areas suggest that black students who are currently being classified educable mentally retarded emotionally disturbed are very likely, under the revised system, to be found "Eligible for full time special education." For example, under the cognitive domain, the standard criteria provides that "the pupil's general level of cognitive functioning on a standardized intelligence test administered by a school psychologist shall be at least two (2) standard deviations below the norm."⁴⁵

The functional criteria states that:

The pupil's general level of cognitive functioning within the school setting is significantly discrepant from the typical pupil and/or appropriate norms. This cognitive deficit shall include and inability to demonstrate personal independence and social responsibility according to age and sociocultural group expectations and any of the following: an inability to generalize/transfer information skills and concepts, an inability to appropriately solve problems; an inability to formulate appropriate judgments and inferences.⁴⁶

The standard and functional criteria for the learning and social/emotional domains and the achievement and behavior educational impact areas are equally likely to describe many black students with special needs.⁴⁷

Significantly, satisfaction of the standard criteria more often than not depends on the child's performance on standardized tests because standardized tests, with all their accompanying problems of bias, discriminatory use and misuse, are the primary evaluation tools. "Most standard criteria are met through the use of standardized tests."⁴⁸

Functional criteria involve the subjective assessments of teachers, child study team members and test givers, who unless they undergo some major transformation, will continue to interject their biased perceptions and misconceptions into the evaluation process, to the detriment of the black student.⁴⁹ Nothing in proposed N.J.A.C. 6:2811.8(f), which provides for flexibility and professional judgment in the evaluation process, will prevent this from occurring.

Thus, the problem is not just test bias. In "Minorities in Special Education," the authorities make the following observations:

"Test bias" is most often cited as the major contributor to the problem, but it seems safe to conclude, after almost 30 years of debate, that there is no general consensus among major measurement experts on the "correct" definition of test bias, and that if it does exist, professionals have been unable to agree on the extent to which it is evident in the two most frequently used measures of intelligence (The Stanford-Binet and Wechsler scales). The procedures that have been developed to minimize the occurrence of test bias—except for the use of multiple measures of performance such as adaptive behavior scales—have had little impact on minority overrepresentation.

We contend that even if an agreement regarding what constitutes test bias could be reached and a test or set of tests that was completely non-biased could be developed, there is no way to ensure that such a measure would be used fairly. It has been noted that minority youngsters appear to be referred for psychoeducational evaluations at rates higher than their enrollments in schools. Given the relatively high probability (.73) of being found eligible for special education once referred, it is quite likely that more minority students would be placed in special classes, simply because a greater percentage of these youngsters would be referred and tested. Students may be deemed eligible for special education services even when no hard evidence exists to support such a placement.⁵⁰

Nor will the use of fewer classification categories resolve the problems now inherent in the referral, assessment, and placement of students. As discussed above, the issues raised in the following statement will continue to be issues unless vigorously and deliberately confronted.

The most extensive study of the evaluation process reports that results are barely more accurate than a flip of the coin, with the evaluation process often providing a psychological justification for the referral. The leading researchers conclude that current classification procedures are plagued with major conceptual and practical problems.

While PL 94-142 includes eleven different classifications of handicapped conditions, "most diagnosis of students placed in special education programs are based on social and psychological criteria. These include measured intelligence, achievement, social behavior and adjustment, and communication and lan-

guage problems. Furthermore, many of the measuring criteria used in classification lack reliability or validity. . . According to one observer, when test results do not produce the desired outcome, evaluators often change the yardstick "If the test scores indicate the child is ineligible, but the teacher really feels the child needs help, we try to select other tests that might make the child eligible." The tests then become "a means of corroborating referral decisions. Testing, therefore, does not drive decisions but is driven by decisions."

It is not just that New Jersey's Plan will not cure the special education system of the bias and discrimination that currently infects it. More problematic is the likelihood that The Plan will make detection of bias and discrimination more difficult. Will Resource Rooms simply serve as a substitute for pejorative, dead-end classifications, thereby becoming the "warehouses" of the nineties for children schools deem to be undesirable and uneducable, whether because of their racial or ethnic background, their culture, their behavior, or their special needs? And further, will Resource Rooms allow schools to circumvent present requirements for parental consent and involvement in the special education process, while serving as a subterfuge for the continuation of a system that has undergone cosmetic changes only?

This is not to say that there is nothing to be praised in *New Jersey's Plan to Revise Special Education*. But for those black students whom schools identify as needing "special" education, The Plan may simply be the latest rendition of a rose by any other name is still a rose. Different lyrics but same tune.

New Jersey's proposed non-categorical special education classification system is a much needed first step in the reform of special education. But the politics of special education are such that a mere dismantling of the classification system will not alter the basic status of blacks and other minorities within special education. Equally warranted are reforms in special education legislation and funding; professional training and practices, especially that of teachers and child study team members; referral, evaluation and placement procedures; and instructional methods and curriculum content.

Reforms, of course, are needed beyond special education. The failure of special education, in fact, may be a failure of the regular educational system more than anything else. Like many large institutions, public schools are resistant to reform and slow to change. These characteristics along with institutional racism and a traditional failure to integrate into the system and cope well with racial and ethnic minorities, have made it difficult to identify and alter the sometimes covert and very sophisticated means schools have devised to separate out those perceived as unacceptably difficult, different, slow, or the like. Thus it is that undesirable minorities can be dumped into separate wastelands for the mildly retarded and emotionally disturbed.

Admittedly, the problems we confront in special education may

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be easier to analyze than to eliminate. Major reforms, no doubt, will be controversial and will mobilize a corps of resistance comprised of those genuinely concerned about the education of all children, including those with special needs, and those with vested personal interests that are unrelated to the educational needs of any students. But the difficulty in achieving reform does not obviate the need for it. As a starting point, we need to reexamine the question of whether a free and appropriate public education can be assured children with handicaps only through separate, albeit supposedly special, educational programming. Is a "separate but equal" policy more justified when the student's status as a special education student, rather than his race, is the determining factor? Increasingly, research and experience indicate that the answer to this question is no, at least in regards to the mildly and moderately retarded and the learning disabled. Separation of these latter groups, it seems, is not only unwarranted, but in many instances, has negative consequences for the student.⁵³

A unitary system of education "structure to meet the unique needs of all students" may offer the best hope for black students who are currently labeled and singled out for special treatment because they are perceived as slow and difficult to educate. As one proponent of a merged system argues:

This move could help ensure that all students not only receive an appropriate education but that they receive it as an inherent right and not as a "special" provision. It also could help us overcome the popular notion that some student (those labeled special) are given appropriate, individualized educational programs because of their needed or "special" condition, rather than because they, just as any other student, should receive an education geared to their capabilities and needs. . .

A dual system of education can serve to legitimize exclusion of some students from regular education, reduce opportunity for equal participation by other students, and sanction other forms of discrimination. (B)y placing a person in a separate category or system of education, it becomes possible to treat the person in ways that would not be tolerated were he or she a fully accepted member of the "normal" or "regular" group. Thus, it is important to explore, suggest, and attempt change.⁵⁴

Nothing is likely more critical to any proposed reform of special education than a change in current funding policies and practices. Because school districts now receive special education funds based upon the number of bodies assigned to mandated classification categories, they have a vested interest in attaching categorical labels to students who have special needs or require special help. In its *Plan to Revise special Education* New Jersey is moving to minimize this

incentive to remove children from the general classroom by proposing a program and budget based funding formula, rather than one based upon the number of students classified. However, it must go further and reexamine the whole concept of maintaining a separate funding stream for special education. If it is a question of accountability for resources and funds, perhaps greater reliance ought to be placed on program accountability and the monitoring of student educational achievement and less on artificial funding boundaries. Whatever the funding formula, it ought to facilitate and encourage schools to provide an appropriate education for a diverse student population within the regular classroom setting, rather than serve as a disincentive for doing so.

Other important issues deserve further scrutiny, especially the relationship between special education is presently structured and carried out and the serious "dropout" problem among black students. Is special education part of the problem or part of the solution?

Can sufficient safeguards ever be built into the present system so as to adequately protect the rights of a student and his family? If our schools are to continue to weed out so-called difficult or slow students, as under our current system, then perhaps something akin to a mandatory day in court, with access to free counsel and expert advice, must be provided before the referral of any child for special education.

Finally, any policy reformulations for special education ought to take into account the question of how it is to the advantage of black students, or any other students for that matter, who may be in need of specialized and individualized services to be identified and assigned pejorative labels such as educable mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed, removed from the regular classroom, and placed in settings in which lowered teacher expectations, and inferior academic and educational programming and services prevail. Will the system better prepare students whose educational lives are entrusted to it for independence and adulthood?—which is, of course, the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of our special education policies and practices.

1. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1948)

2. See e.g., Lori and Bill Granger, *The Magic Feather* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1986), in which the authors describe the nightmare and pain they experienced in their fight to save their son from special education.

3. See esp., *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 334 F. Supp. 1256, 343 F. Supp. 279 (E.D. Pa. 1971, 1972) and *Mills v. D.C. Board of Education*, 348 F. Supp. 866 (D.D.C. 1972), *contempt proceedings*, EHLR 551,643 (D.D.C. 1980), which established the right of all children, including handicapped children, to a public education, and by way of federal legislation Pub. L. 89-750 (1969) (providing grants to states for initiating, expanding and improving education of handicapped children; Pub. L. 91-230 (1970) (repealing Pub. L. 89-750 and establishing a similar grant program); and Pub. L. 93-380 (1974) (increasing federal aid for

References

special education).

The *Education of the Handicapped Act* (EHA) refers to the 1970 and 1974 acts and Pub. L. 94-142, which amended them. The EHA has been subsequently amended in 1978 (Pub. L. 89-773); 1983 (Pub. L. 98-199, extending and strengthening programs authorized under the EHA), and 1986 (Pub. L. 99-372, authorizing the award of reasonable attorneys' fees to certain prevailing parties and clarifying rights, procedures and remedies under other anti-discrimination laws and Pub. L. 99-457, authorizing early intervention programs for infants and toddlers and their families).

4. Codified at 20 United States Code (U.S.C.), sections 1400-1468, implementing regulations at 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 300.

5. Lisa Walker, "Procedural Rights in the Wrong System: Special Education Is Not Enough," in *Images of the Disabled, Disabled Images*, ed. A. Gartner and T. Joe (New York: Praeger Publishers), 1987), 97.

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7. The Preamble to Pub. L. 94-142 (sec. 3(c)) states that: "It is the purpose of this Act to assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all handicapped children, and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children."

8. John Ghedman and William Roth, *The Unexpected Minority, Handicapped Children in America* (New York: The Carnegie Corporation, 1980), 174, and chapters 9 and 10.

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11. Jane Mercer, "Institutional Anglocentrism: Labeling Mental Retardates in Public Schools," in *Race, Change and Urban Policy* (New York: Sage Publishing, 1971), 317.

12. *Ibid.*, 315-23.

13. Larry Maheady, Bob Algozzine, and James Ysseldyke, "Minorities in Special Education," 51 *The Education Digest* (September 1985), pp. 50-51.

14. Pugach, *supra* note 10, 124, 135.

15. Walker, *supra* note 5, 106.

16. In *Larry P. V. Riles*, 343 F. Supp. 1306, *aff'd*, 502 F.2d 963, *further proceedings*, 495 F. Supp. 926, *aff'd*, 502 F.2d 693 (9th Cir. 1984), the seminal case on the issue of test bias and the classification of black children in special education, the court held that California schools could not use unvalidated standardized IQ tests to identify and place black children in segregated special education classes for the educable mentally retarded. But see *PASE (Parents in Action in Special Education) v. Hannon*, 506 F. Supp. 831 (N.D. Ill. 1980), upholding as lawful the tests *Larry P.* held unlawful because they were racially discriminatory.

17. Gartner and Lipsky, *supra* note 9, 372-73, state that: "The number of students classified as learning disabled rose 119 percent between 1976-77 and 1984-85, at a time when the overall special education population rose 16 percent." See also, James Tucker, "Ethnic Proportions in Classes for the Learning Disabled: Issues in Nonbiased Assessment," 14 *J. Spec. Ed.* 93 (1980).

18. Seventh Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1985), p. 4.

19. Gartner and Lipsky, *supra* note 9, 373.

20. Tucker, *supra* note 17, 104-05.

21. N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.5(e)7ii.

22. As of September 30, 1986, 57,943 students in New Jersey were classified "Perceptually Impaired" (PI). The next largest classification, "Eligible for Speech Correction Services," had 43,996 students.

A sampling of school districts from Atlantic County demonstrates the extraordinary popularity of the PI classification: Absecon, 82 PI in a total handicapped student population of 134; Atlantic City, 549 out of 1002; Brigantine, 54 out of 118; Buena Regional, 148 out of 357; Egg Harbor, 379 out of 694; Mainland Regional High School, 48 out of 64; Pleasantville, 225 out of 409; Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School, 176 out of 269.

23. Walker, *supra* note 5, 104; Garten and Lipaky, *supra* note 9, 377.

24. *Ibid.*, see also National Center for Education Statistics, "The School-Age Handicapped," pp. 21-22.

Although "most learning disabled and speech or language impaired students were placed either in regular classes or resource rooms (77 percent and 91 percent, respectively), (o)nly 5 percent of mentally retarded students were placed in regular classes, and 29 percent were placed in resource rooms. Nationally, 50 percent of mentally retarded students are served in separate classes. States also reported that only 12 percent of their emotionally disturbed students were placed in regular classes; approximately 34 percent of the emotionally disturbed students were placed in resource rooms and another 34 percent in separate classes." Ninth Annual Report to Congress, *infra* note 25, 19.

25. Ninth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of

the Education of the Handicapped Act (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1987), 166.

26. Walker, *supra* note 5, 106.

27. *Ibid.*, see also, Gartner and Lipsky, *supra* note 9, 375-76, and William and Susan Stainback, "A Rationale for the Merger of Special and Regular Education," 51 *Exceptional Children* (No 2) (October 1984), 102-111.

28. The incident rate (IR) represents the frequency with which students with a particular handicapping condition appear within the total population of students. The IR is calculated by determining what percent of the total number of students for a particular racial/ethnic group, the number of students in a specific classification for that group represents.

29. Statistics obtained or calculated from New Jersey Public School Racial/Ethnic Enrollment by County, District, and Sex, September 30, 1986, and SPECIAL EDUCATION, A Statistical Report for the 1986-87 School Year, New Jersey State Department of Education (September 1987).

30. John Manni, David Winikur, and Maureen Keller, "A Report of The Status of Minority Group Representation in Special Education Programs in New Jersey" (Trenton: New Jersey Department of Education, 1980), 11. "There are not only proportionately more Black than White children with educational handicaps but they are more often labeled "educable mentally retarded" or "emotionally disturbed."

31. National Center for Education Statistics, *The School-Age Handicapped* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), p. xi.

32. See Granger and Granger, *The Magic Feather*, chap. 13, Maheady, et al., *supra* note 13, 50; Manni, et al., *supra* note 28, chap. 3, and Report by the Education Advocates Coalition, "Misclassification of Minorities in Educable Mentally Retarded classes," 51 *Exceptional Children* 113 (1984).

33. Cooperman, Saul, Memorandum to Members, State Board of Education, Re Proposed New Rules—N.J.A.C. 6-11.1 to 11-13, Rules and Regulations for Pilot Districts Implementing the Plan to Revise Special Education in New Jersey (October 1, 1987).

34. New Jersey State Department of Education, Division of Special Education, *A Plan to Revise Special Education in New Jersey* (January 1986), 1-2.

35. Belvedere (combining Hope, Harmony and White Townships), Bergen County Vocational, Bernardsville, Elizabeth, Galloway Township, Holmdel, Manchester, Ocean City, Pennsville, and Washington Township (Morris County).

36. Cooperman, 1; proposed N.J.A.C. 67-28-11.1(b).

37. The Plan, 3.

38. The Plan, 3-4.

39. "Current practices. . . rest on the assumption that when students experience academic and behavioral problems in schools it is because something is wrong with them. Assessors then routinely administer standardized batteries of tests in the hope of uncovering or

isolating the "real" cause of the child's problem." Maheady, et al, *supra* note 13, 50.

40. See discussion in text under "The Promise and the Reality."

41. See Kirp, David, "Schools As Sorters: The Constitutional and Policy Implications of Student Classification," 121 UPa L. Rev 705, 731-37(1973) for an extensive discussion of the destructive, longterm impact of school-imposed, stigmatizing labels and classification on children

42. The Plan at 5-6 and proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.7(d) 1, 2 and 3

43. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.7(f).

44. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.8 Eligibility Criteria

a) In order to be eligible for special education and/or related services, a comprehensive evaluation of the pupil shall be made to determine if the pupil meets the criteria in a domain in which a handicapping condition may manifest itself and an area of educational impact. . .

b) The pupil must meet both standard and functional criteria in order to satisfy a domain or an impact area.

45. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.8(d)1i.

46. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.(d)1ii.

47. See proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11 8(d)2 and 3 and 6 28-11.8(e)1 and 2.

48. Proposed N.J.A.C. 6:28-11.8(g)1.

49. See discussion in text under "The Promise and the Reality "

50. Maheady, et al., *supra* note 13, 50-51

51. Gartner and Lipsky, *supra* note 9, 372. (footnotes omitted)

52. Stainback and Stainback, *supra* note 27, see also, Gartner and Lipsky, *supra* note 9, 382-90, and Walker, *supra* note 5, 106-113.

53. Stainback and Stainback, *supra* note 27, 102.

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The Search for Effective Education Models: A Call for Action

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The majority of studies on the state of urban schools tend to emphasize their similar failure to motivate, educate, and graduate a large portion of their students. Indeed, one such study, *Dropping Out of School in New York: The Invisible People of Color* (1987) cited data that indicated dropout figures as high as 80 percent for Latinos and 72 percent for Black Americans.¹

As disturbing as this data is, there are a number of urban schools located throughout the country whose performance and standards of excellence can be measured against most in the nation. These predominantly black and minority schools, through innovation, leadership, and stamina, are creating environments for learning and success that need to be studied, emulated, and implemented by federal, state and local policy makers and practitioners who are concerned about the educational process in cities and minority communities. The effective urban schools and multi-institution programs discussed in this report can serve as examples for urban, minority, and other schools in need of models to emulate.

It is important to keep in mind that, contrary to some opinion, including the opinion of many education policy makers, urban schools if committed and inspired, do have the capability to educate our children. Chester E. Finn, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Education for Research and Improvement, cites the major causes for dropping out of schools as factors that are outside the control of schools. In his opinion, the effects of poverty, broken homes, poorly educated parents and problems with the law are those factor that make it nearly impossible for some students to complete high school.²

This philosophy underestimates the potential influence of the urban school on its students. As long as we blame the students, the parents, and the home environment for the dropout problem, many schools will remain complacent and continue to practice triage—serving only those who are most likely to succeed.

Instead of blaming the victim, we must purposefully try new ways to make more students want to go to school, inquire, learn, and graduate. Programs that are not working must be eliminated without hesitation—and equal efforts must be made to identify, create and build new educational models, partnership arrangements, and other innovations that can do the job.

Given the backdrop of failure in most urban districts, it is relieving to learn that the results are not exclusively bad. In spite of political chaos, poorly implemented curricula, dilapidated buildings and a lack of support systems, some urban schools do succeed.

The following report examines a number of effective schools and programs and offers recommendations for transplanting their successes to their less successful counterparts.

Elementary schools, in order to be effective, must teach children to read. Reading is the most important subject that a child learns in any school at any time. There can be no doubt that a school that fails in this most critical task cannot be described as effective. Additionally, there is sizable evidence that reading failure leads to overall school failure and increased numbers of dropouts. Urban school districts in New Jersey show alarming dropout rates in the early high school years particularly among minority students. Research into the performance of students who dropped out of school shows a crucial link between dropping out and failure to learn to read.³

Not nearly enough can be said about the need for urban schools to teach reading early and effectively. In the well published report entitled, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, the Commission on Reading states in its introduction, "Reading is a basic life skill. It is the cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life."⁴

Schools that do an effective job in the teaching of reading regard the task as the premier concern of the school. Additionally, recent studies have identified other factors common to effective schools. For example, the report by William J. Bennett, entitled, *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning* (United States Department of Education, 1986), indicates that schools with high student achievement and morale possess:

- Vigorous instructional leadership
- Principals who make clear, consistent, and fair decisions
- An emphasis on discipline and a safe and orderly environment
- Instructional practices that focus on basic skills and academic achievement
- Collegiality among teachers in support of student achievement
- Teachers with high expectations that all their students can and will learn, and
- Frequent review of student progress

Further research on effective schools by the late Dr. Ronald Edmonds identifies even more school-related factors that are responsible for children learning.

Dr. Edmonds' major thesis is that "....all children are eminently educable and the behavior of the school is critical in determining the quality of that education."⁵

Dr. Edmonds' study in Detroit led to an enumeration of the characteristics listed below as examples of common elements in instructionally effective schools.

Characteristics of Effective Schools

1. A climate in which it is incumbent upon all personnel to be instructionally effective for all pupils.
2. School leadership that compels teachers to bring all children to a minimum level of mastery of basic skills.
3. A self-generating teacher corps that has a critical mass of dedicated people who are committed to being effective for all children they teach.
4. A highly politicized Parent-Teacher Organization that holds the schools to close instructional account.
5. An environment in which school personnel are as eager to avoid things that don't work as they are to implement things that do.

Edmonds' research encourages us to examine more closely what schools do in order to be effective. It is particularly useful to look at program offerings in selected schools and to examine the principal shortcomings of many of these programs. From this review, we can offer models of effective programs that, if adopted by ineffective districts, can have a direct impact on reducing school dropout rates.

The quest for good schooling, although a paramount issue in the 1980s is paralleled by the search for effective education programs. Even in school districts that offer a range of specialty programs such as those with an emphasis on art, music, science or on the gifted and talented, the search continues for curricula and other educational offerings designed to provide young people with motivation and multiple career paths. School communities in New Jersey are no different from what appears to be a national trend. Black communities in New Jersey are demanding more in terms of academic and cultural excellence for their school children.

School districts in urban New Jersey are attempting on limited resources to comply with numerous and varied demands by local residents. On the one hand, largely poor and often politically troubled districts are working against the odds in their attempt to remediate large numbers of students whose earlier education has been ineffective. However, these districts also recognize the need to provide schooling for those African American children whose academic achievement and economic condition are higher than the urban norm. Very often, these youngsters are withdrawn from the urban public schools as their parents seek alternatives not offered within the boundaries of these public school settings.

Thus burdened with this dual mission, several predominately Black school districts in New Jersey attempt to identify and employ effective models of education designed to serve heterogeneous populations with divergent needs.

Effective Elementary Schools in Newark

In the City of Newark, New Jersey where reports about low pupil performance and schooling-ineffectiveness are legion, there still exists good elementary schools where children continue to learn and to grow. Schools that produce consistently good results in terms of

math, reading and other basic skills indicators

include Harriet Tubman, Ann Street, Miller Street, Mount Vernon and Camden Middle School. Most recently, Camden Middle School was cited by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education as a highly effective demonstration school.

Perhaps what is most notable about these cited schools is that they represent "pockets of effectiveness" distributed throughout this large city. Each of these schools is characterized by strong and intelligent leadership, high pupil and teacher attendance and a focus on teaching and learning.

A close look at these schools and their performance is advised. These schools represent examples of effectiveness in urban education. In each instance it appears that once the school leadership focused on the critical task of educating children, the mission became clear and a positive and reassuring portrait of schooling effectiveness resulted.

Our expectation is that more elementary schools in Newark will show good results as the policies and practices of effective schools are transferred around the city.

We turn now to model programs that the Newark school district participates in with surrounding colleges and universities in an effort to inspire high school students to continue their education beyond high school graduation. These programs are innovative examples of collaborative arrangements with local institutions of higher education and the Newark public schools to provide enriching and challenging academic experiences for district youth.

In collaboration with the New Jersey Institute of Technology, the public school district participates in a wide range of programs designed to enrich students' backgrounds in mathematics, science and technology, and further to stimulate urban minority students toward engineering and scientific fields where nationally they are underrepresented.

The center for Pre-College Programs at NJIT has been in existence since 1980 and has expanded to include training in computer languages and programming as well as year-long courses in integrated calculus and physics for highly talented students in the Newark high schools.

Funding for the Center for Pre-College Programs is in the main provided by businesses and industries in New Jersey that expect to gain future employees from the technical schools. The New Jersey Institute of Technology lends faculty and housing to this worthwhile program. An advisory board meets regularly to maintain a record of progress on this collaborative mission and traditionally a staff person from the Newark Board of Education has been a member of that board.

The Consortium for Pre-College Education is a partnership between Newark Colleges and Universities and the Newark Board of Education for the purpose of decreasing the high school dropout rate and increasing the number of students going on to college. In the Pre College Program, Newark 7th and 9th grade students receive instruction in primary subjects as well as other areas that are designed to enable

Partnerships and Collaborations in Newark

New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT): High Tech Programs

The Consortium for Pre-College Education

them to make college and career choices.

Well over six hundred Newark students participated in this combination of after school, Saturday and summer programs in the 1986-87 academic year. The Consortium made up of Essex County College, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Newark and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey established yearly objectives to help meet its long range goal of inspiring significant numbers of high school graduates to pursue a college education.

The curriculum is based upon a high expectation of achievement as well as counseling, with the latter addressing both personal and academic concerns. Reading, writing, math, study and test taking skills and science are the medium through which students are encouraged to achieve, learn and develop high self esteem. Career exploration and orientation, computer literacy, field and recreational trips and an emphasis on role models in math and science fields complete the range of activities offered within the curriculum. A Parent Support Group and Principals Advisory Group, that encourage parental participation and effective school/consortium collaboration, are also important elements of the program. The curriculum is based on a combination of high school requirements and college entry skills. Diversification of experience for pre-college students is attained through the differences among participating members of the consortium. For example, students enrolled at the University of Medicine and Dentistry Pre-College Program focus on health professions and medicine, while the New Jersey Institute of Technology emphasizes engineering, technology and mathematics. All participating institutions include the following in their respective academic programs: special lectures and demonstrations by college faculty, current events and research and discussion of role models.

Rutgers University (Saturday Program)

Another collaboration with an area university is the Saturday Academy Program between the Newark Board of Education and Rutgers University, Newark. The Saturday Academy annually offers about 100 Newark high school students a twenty-two week preparation program for the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Programs such as those described above represent a growing recognition on the part of urban school districts that extensive innovation is necessary to provide quality education programs for today's youth.

Partnerships And Collaborations in Other States

Select Programs in Science and Engineering (SPICE)

SPICE is a ten-week program in New York City that provides mathematics instruction and laboratory exposure in science and engineering to economically disadvantaged youth. Its goal is to motivate and prepare high school students for careers in science and engineering. All 10th graders enrolled in 10th grade mathematics at 18 participating New York City high schools may, upon demonstrating an interest, be part of the SPICE program. Students attend Saturday sessions with mornings consisting of mathematics and laboratory work, and afternoons involving guest lecturers from various related fields. The program also includes career and college planning or counseling sessions.

The majority of the participants in this program show significant improvement in their math and science skills. The SPICE program is supported by both public and private funds.

The CHAMP program is a partnership between two Wisconsin school systems and the University of Wisconsin to encourage minority youth in 9th and 12th grades to stay in high school and take courses to prepare them for college. The primary goals of the program are to improve the educational achievement of minority youth by strengthening academic skills and motivation, to encourage post secondary study, and to encourage a peer, family, and community environment that supports academic success for minority youth. CHAMP consists of a six-week summer program that targets skills in math, science, English and Computer Science and a university sponsored two-day workshop to orient eighth graders to post secondary education. The workshop shows the connection between high school and college courses and the work world.

The Program in Scholarly Research is a year round program in which outstanding high school students serve as research assistants to University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, professors. Its purpose is to challenge highly motivated and intelligent students in an academic area for which they have a particular interest.

The program that began in 1981 has spring, fall and summer sessions. During the spring, students go to the University on weekends and during school holidays to begin background work for the research project. During the summer, they live on campus and work a full day, every day, in the laboratories. Students are also required to attend evening seminars. When high school begins again in the fall, the students resume the weekend and holiday schedule. Research topics include physical and biological sciences, humanities and the social sciences.

The Program in Scholarly Research for Urban/Minority High School students is funded through the University of Michigan's Office of the President and the Howard University/Rockefeller Foundation Program in Life Science for Minority High School Students.

The Boston Compact is a five-year multi-organizational effort to improve the scholastic skills of high school students and to enhance their employment opportunities. The Compact is comprised of two agreements: one between the Boston high schools and the post-secondary education community and one between the Boston high schools and the business community. The organizations and agencies participating in the Boston Compact are as follows: the Boston Public School System, the Boston Private Industries Council, Inc. (PIC), the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, several hundred local business, the Tri-Lateral Council for Quality Education, Inc., a Coordinating Committee composed of the chief executive officers of Boston businesses, the Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency, twenty-five area colleges and universities, and Boston's CBO Network. The Compact is funded

Creating Higher Aspirations and Motivation Program (CHAMP)

Program in Scholarly Research for Urban/Minority High School Students

The Boston Compact

by the Boston Public School System, local businesses and charitable foundations.

The Boston Compact is unique in that the local school district, area colleges and universities and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce joined ranks in developing programs that aim, among other things, to reduce dropout rates, improve job and college placement rates, increase financial aid opportunities and strengthen the college prep curriculum.

This program has resulted in increasingly good summer and year long hiring rates for students attending and graduating from the Boston Public schools.

Alternative High Schools

Middle College High School

In the main, alternative schools have been designed to accommodate a growing number of youth who cannot adjust to the regular comprehensive high schools. Quite often youth who attend alternative school settings have had their fill of the lock-step world of the traditional high school and the alternative school represents a second chance at earning a diploma and pursuing a career.

Administered by the Board of Education of New York and La Guardia Community College, the Middle College High School is a secondary educational program that provides economically disadvantaged high school students with the advantages associated with college enrollment. High school students use library facilities, laboratories, a computer center as well as other facilities regularly used by college students. The objective is to decrease the dropout rate and to graduate students who are prepared for either college or the working world.

The school's central focus is on career education. The academic year is divided into three terms. Two terms involve academic studies, while the third term involves a full or part-time cooperative education internship, through which the student receives high school and college credits, but no pay. Students select internships from three major areas: human services, business technology, and liberal arts and sciences. Although all students are eligible for internships, students with deficiencies in basic skills participate in part-time internships, while receiving remedial instruction. Regular classes have a maximum of 27 students, but remedial classes do not exceed 15 students. Many extra-curricular activities occur during the day so that students who work after school do not miss out.

Success is evaluated, using attendance as a major factor. The average attendance is 84.5 percent as compared to the City of New York's rate of 76 percent. Over 80 percent of Middle College High School students go on to college (half of which attend La Guardia Community College), while only 54 percent of New York's high school students attend college. Attrition rates are 14 percent as compared to the City of New York's rate of 46 percent. Over 100,000 volunteer hours are contributed to the community during the academic year as a result of these internships.

The Leonardo da Vinci High School, which began in September of 1987, is a magnet school, administered jointly by D'Youville College and the Buffalo school district. The goal of the high school is to provide a liberal arts education to a wide range of urban students, through interdisciplinary study and an emphasis on critical thinking. Fifty-five 9th graders attend classes on the D'Youville College campus. The college provides assistance in curriculum development, materials and in service training for teachers and administrators. Community projects are also incorporated into the curriculum.

Future plans call for an enrollment of 400 students from the 9th through 12th grades and college credit for high school seniors.

The potential for success with carefully constructed alternative school settings should not be ignored. Current dropout statistics for youth in urban centers require revamping of services if improvement is to be expected over the next decade and into the twenty-first century.

Our thrust for this paper has been to create a sense of discomfort with the status quo of educational ineffectiveness in the many cities that serve urban minority youth. However, and most importantly, we sought to awaken a general concern among parents, educators, administrators and particularly legislators and policymakers about the need to become proactive in improving schooling and the life chances of African-American children in schools.

The schools and school districts cannot improve in a vacuum. They require the combined efforts of high-level decisionmakers joined for the purpose of ensuring quality education for all children. We urge the state legislature in New Jersey along with the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education to accept the challenge to positively impact schooling in urban communities. Both the Commissioner and the State Board of Education must educate themselves on the quality of education available to urban youth and work diligently for needed reforms.

A recent publication by the National Conference on Educating Black Children offers the following suggestions to policy makers to plan and provide for effective educational policies and programs.

1. Eliminate and replace those policies and practices that are institutionalized but obsolete
2. Establish a comprehensive equity policy
3. Adopt policies and practices that facilitate school personnel interaction with community and social services agencies.
4. Assure that recognition and appropriate incentives are directly related to the success of Black students.
5. Encourage school-business partnerships.
6. Develop and present instructional policy models that meet the needs of Black students.
7. Promote high standards of academic excellence and cultural awareness.

Leonardo da Vinci High School

The Call For Action

African American youth in New Jersey deserve an equal chance to become effective citizens taxpayers. It is only through combined efforts that such a goal will be reached.

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Status of Blacks in Higher Education in New Jersey

Equal opportunity has been a recurring theme on the educational landscape for much of the second half of this century. Yet today, as we approach the 1990s, blacks are still seriously underrepresented in participation in college. At the start of this decade, the percentage of whites over 25 years old holding baccalaureate degrees was more than double that of blacks or Hispanics. The implications of this state of affairs are large and steadily growing for institutions of higher education, for minorities, and for the nation's general economic, political and social well-being.

Today the country is already rich with minorities: more than 125 ethnic, racial and language groups reside here in substantial numbers. We have not, however, been totally—or even generally—successful in weaving these groups equitably into the nation's social, economic and political fabric. Although, over the years, a succession of immigrant groups have, within a generation or two managed to join the mainstream, for all intents and purposes, they have now become part of the "majority."

Lagging achievement by blacks and other minorities in higher education is only one facet, though a critical one, of what is obviously a broader national concern regarding the inequities that afflict certain groups within our society. After an era of genuine progress for these groups in a number of important areas, including educational attainment, progress seems to have stalled and, in some cases, dissipated.

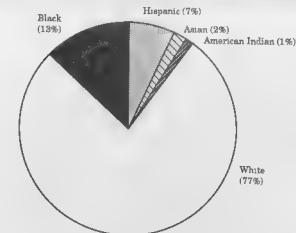
For many, education is the arena in that equity is promoted and socio-economic polarization is averted. For all its unfulfilled potential as a remedy in the past, this is still held to be true. Once an individual could raise his state through hard and relatively unskilled work on the farm or in the factory. Today few legitimate avenues to a better life exist other than through education. Education not only helps to transmit the values and attitudes that erode discrimination, but it also provides the essential foundation of skills and knowledge that allows all individuals, as adults, to compete on an equitable basis for the economic rewards that society has to offer. Success with regard to educational achievement will inevitably enhance efforts in other areas—political, economic and social. Failure, however, will almost certainly mean defeat on these other fronts as well.

The disparity that demands our most immediate attention and effort is the unequal educational preparation of blacks. This limits the benefits that this group can gain from the opportunities for higher education afforded to the general population. Despite the uncertainties in forecasting, the nation's demographic trends are clearly charted and well publicized regarding its impact on the economic and social well-

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Figure 1 *College-Age Population, 1980*



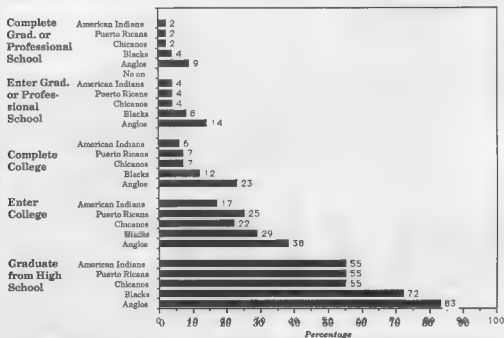
Source U.S. Bureau of the Census

being of this nation. All data point to the growing importance of blacks and other minorities in our population.

The discussion that follows aims to provide the reader with a status of the trends in the academic preparation of blacks and their participation in higher education. This is seen as a prerequisite for economic competitiveness in an economy that depends on the innovativeness of a highly skilled labor force to remain in the forefront of technological developments, for the high standard of living it enjoys; and ultimately, the preservation of the nation's political system. All data points to growing importance of blacks and other minorities in our population.

In 1980, the traditional college age population was 13 percent black, 10 percent other minorities and 77 percent white (Figure 1). The projections of the composition of the college-age cohort suggest that blacks will be an even more significant group of the potential pool for college in the year 2000 and beyond. Alexander Astin (1982) in his analysis of the status of minorities in higher education conceptualized "the educational system as a metaphoric 'pipeline' with 'leakage' points from that disproportionately large numbers of minority students leave the educational system, particularly after a high school." Figure 2 shows the distribution for the selected ethnic groups.

Following on this, two pertinent issues are discussed as a part of college participation rates: the trends in high school graduation rates and proportion of this group that enrolls in college. Nationally, trends show that the number of high school graduates peaked in 1978-79 at 2,992,802 and declined steadily to 2,510,512 in 1985. It is projected that by 1992 the number of high school graduates will have declined to



2,288,063 nationally. Subsumed in this issue is the increasing number of black high school graduates nationally: rising from 53 percent in 1975 to 60 percent in 1985. However there has been a decline in the proportion who enroll in college as depicted in Figure 3.

In general, New Jersey's high school graduation and college enrollment trends parallel national trends with the exception of black high school graduates who declined slightly from 11,845 to 11,609 students. Also, college enrollment fluctuated from 47 percent in 1980 to 45 percent in 1986. It is projected, that based on current patterns the number of college bound black graduates will fall below 4,000 by 1995.

The finding that the poverty rate for blacks is significantly higher than for whites (OERI, 1986) is not surprising. However the analysis by Richard Nathan (1986) reveals an increase in black poverty rates of 18 percent since 1980 and a decline for whites of approximately the same amount. In addition, the concomitant factors of poverty as it impacts on the education of blacks is well-documented. One such factor is the quality of education and its effects. On the national level, black students in 1980 constituted 16 percent of the nation's public elementary and secondary school enrollments (Plisko 1984). Of this group, 41 percent were attending low-income and low-quality inner-city schools

Figure 2. *The Educational Pipeline in the U.S.: Higher Education Participation at the Beginning of the 1980s*

Source: Alexander Astin, *Minorities in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982)

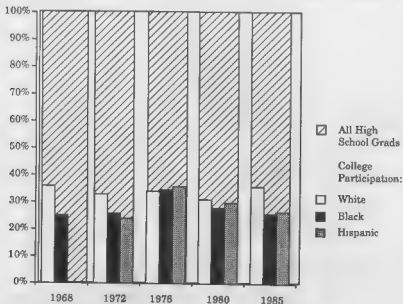


Figure 3. National College Participation Rates by High School Grads

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-20, Number 404 and Number 409

(Thomas 1987). Orfield et al (1984) and Wilson (1984) reported an increase in black enrollment at these schools.

Figure 4 shows that in New Jersey, 66 percent of the black students enrolled in public schools are at those located in the poor urban areas denoted as DFG A and B districts. 30 percent are in Essex County, an area characterized by high density black and other minority population and lack good public elementary and secondary school systems (Figure 5). Black students are heavily concentrated in these urban districts and are not provided with satisfactory academic preparation for college.

Poor academic preparation for blacks is also translated into lower performance on traditional indicators used to measure readiness for college. Thomas reflects that the inadequate pre-college preparation and poor performance of blacks on standardized tests may be partially due to the poor quality of teaching and substandard educational resources in many of the public schools that these students attend. National trends on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) as given in Figure 6 suggest that blacks have improved in their academic preparedness for college during the 1980s. However, subsumed under this apparent increase is the differential performance of blacks at select levels on the SATs. While the numbers of black test takers decreased by 7 percent between 1981 and 1985, the numbers of students scoring

	Fall 1978		Fall 1980		Fall 1984		Fall 1985		Fall 1986	
	No. of Blacks	% of Total	No. of Blacks	% of Total	No. of Blacks	% of Total	No. of Blacks	% of Total	No. of Blacks	% of Total
Rutgers U.	3,202	11.3	3,474	12.5	2,815	10.2	2,675	9.6	2,779	9.7
NJIT	164	5.3	229	7.2	270	8.1	279	8.6	287	9.0
UMDNJ (SHRP)	46	44.2	59	52.2	32	50.8	32	53.3	27	15.1
State Colleges	4,507	10.2	4,145	9.5	3,804	9.8	3,669	9.9	3,333	9.2
Comm Colleges	6,789	17.0	7,260	16.3	5,827	14.1	4,964	12.9	4,587	12.3
Independents	2,809	8.2	3,221	9.1	2,725	8.7	2,681	8.7	2,364	9.1
Total	17,507	11.7	18,388	11.9	15,473	10.9	14,237	10.4	13,377	9.9

Table 13 *Black Full-Time Undergraduates as a Percent of Total Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment, by Sector*

Source: Annual Report on Higher Education in New Jersey, 1985-1986

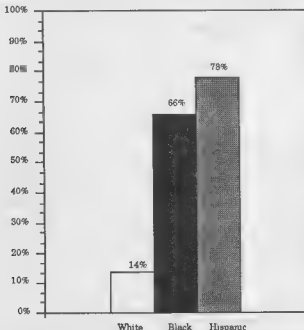
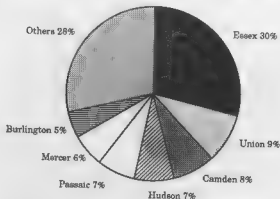


Figure 4. Percentage of Public School Students by Ethnicity Enrolled in DFG A and B Districts

Source: 1980 Census Counts of Population by Race and Spanish Origin. State Data Center, N.J. Department of Labor and Industry Office of Management and Budget, N.J. Department of Treasury, N.J. Department of Education.

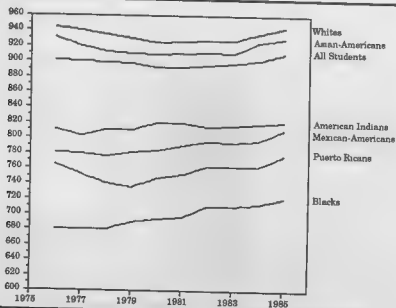
(Opposite) Figure 5. *N.J. Black Public School Enrollment Percentage Distribution by County, 1984-1985*

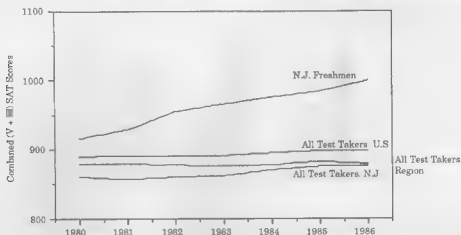
Source: 1980 Census Counts of Population by Race and Spanish Origin. State Data Center, N.J. Department of Labor and Industry Office of Management and Budget, N.J. Department of Treasury, N.J. Department of Education



(below) Figure 6 *SAT Total Means, 1976-1985, by Ethnic Group*

Source: Ramis and Arbeiter, Profiles, College-Bound Seniors 1985 (N.Y.: College Entrance Examination Board, 1986)





above 500 increased by 12 percent on the verbal subtest and 16 percent on the math. However, the absolute number of black students scoring 1,000 or better remains unacceptably low. The comparison with cohorts of other ethnic groups on math and verbal scores, of 500 or better revealed that a significant gap remains despite the increases in scores that have occurred. The further up the educational pipeline that is examined, the wider the gap performance between blacks and other ethnic groups.

The data for New Jersey, (Figure 6) show that scores for New Jersey enrolled Freshmen who take the SAT have been rising steadily in the 1980s. SAT scores for blacks in (Figure 7) the 1985 College Board survey of New Jersey high school senior report that "about 15 percent of black test takers reporting (1,194 of 4,672 total) scored above the 1985 New Jersey mean score on both the verbal and math sections."

Nationally as well as locally, the enrollment of blacks in institutions of higher learning has been declining. This trend is in the face of a seemingly rising number of high school graduates. With regard to New Jersey enrollment patterns of blacks for both full time and part-time undergraduate enrollment show declining enrollment in the 1980s. Full time fall undergraduate enrollment declined from a high of 18,388 in 1980 to the current level of 13,377. The community colleges enrolled the largest number of black students, and as Table 13 shows, they experienced the largest loss in black enrollment. In fact, black enrollment is reported as declining at a faster rate than overall college enrollment. Part-time enrollment has been a significant contributor in college participation. Figure 8 provides data on the full time and part-time enrollment of blacks in college. An analysis of these two types of

Figure 7: *N.J. Public Senior Colleges and Universities: Comparison of SAT Scores for Test Takers and Enrolled Freshmen**

Source: Annual Report of Higher Education in New Jersey, 1986-1987

*regularly admitted, full-time, first-time, fall of each year

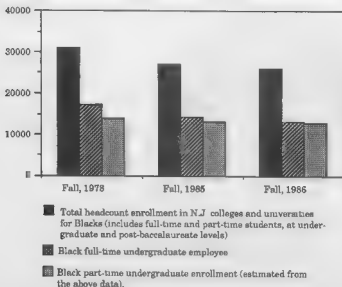


Figure 8. *Black Undergraduate Enrollment for Selected Years in N.J.*

Source: Annual Report of Higher Education in New Jersey, 1986-87

enrollment show that the level of black part-time enrollment has changed minimally over the 1980s. In fact, there has not been an increase in part-time enrollment to offset the decline in full-time black undergraduate enrollment.

On this educational pipeline, nationwide, blacks receive a small proportion of the degrees awarded in any year: and as the data in Table 14 for three selected periods show, this level has fallen at the bachelor and masters levels and remains relatively unchanged at the doctorate level.

Within the group, almost twice as many women as men receive degrees. In New Jersey (Table 15), the proportion of the degrees awarded to blacks has remained stable at 7 percent over the past eight years. These data suggest that few blacks are being prepared to function in this era of technological and economic development both nationally and within the state.

Many explanations have been proffered for the dearth of qualified blacks in the nation. These reasons have been documented in many studies. In the higher education environment, current discussion focuses on the need to provide role models and mentors for our youth to assist in the nurturing and development of our youths' intellect as well as their motivation for achievement in college. However, the employment of blacks in institutions of higher education whether in administration or at the faculty level remains at very low levels. Nationally, there has been minimal change in black employment since the 1970s,

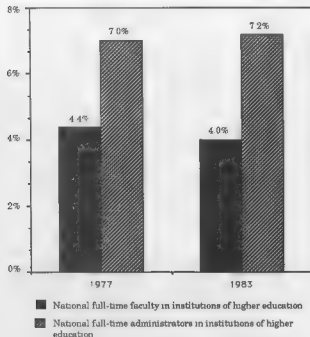


Figure 9. National Full Time Employment for Blacks in Public Colleges and Universities by Employment Categories

Source: Minorities in Higher Education, American Council in Education, 1986

with levels at 4 percent full-time faculty and 7 percent in administration (Figure 9). In New Jersey the employment levels of these two groups are a little higher at 5.6 percent and 14.1 percent respectively in 1985-86, representing an increase in the latter group of two percentage points over 1977-78 (Figure 10).

The low level of achievement among blacks on the educational pipeline has definitely fed into this system such that enough blacks are neither prepared for the technological fields in industry nor for higher education.

For the past several years, discussions about the future of higher education have focused on the year 2000, outlining sweeping demographic, social, and economic changes and speculating about how these changes are likely to affect colleges and universities across the country. New Jersey institutions of higher education will not be insulated from these changing conditions. Predictions about New Jersey's future are similar to, but not identical with, those for the rest of the country. Of specific interest among the population projections for New Jersey are the effects on age and race distributions.

Conclusion

	1975-76		1980-81		1984-85		Percent Change 1975-76 to 1985-85
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	
Bachelors							
Black	59,122	6.4	60,673	6.5	57,473	5.9	-2.8
Men	25,634	5.1	24,511	5.2	23,018	4.7	-10.2
Women	33,488	8.0	361,162	7.8	34,455	7.2	2.9
Masters							
Black	20,345	6.6	17,183	5.8	13,939	4.9	-31.5
Men	7,809	4.7	6,158	4.2	5,200	3.6	-33.4
Women	12,536	8.7	10,975	7.4	8,739	6.1	-30.3
Doctorate							
Black	1,213	3.6	1,265	3.9	1,154	3.6	-4.9
Men	771	5.7	694	3.1	561	2.6	-27.2
Women	442	3	571	5.6	593	5.4	34.1

Notes.

1. Some institutions did not report the racial ethnic data for earned degrees. Data for some of these nonreporting institutions were imputed. Because of under-reporting and nonreporting of racial ethnic data, totals on this table may be slightly smaller than totals appearing on other tables. Because of rounding, totals may not add to totals.

2. Degrees awarded to men as a percentage of all bachelors degrees awarded that year

3. Degrees awarded to women as a percentage of all bachelors degrees awarded that year

Table 14. *Black Full-Time Undergraduates as a Percent of Total Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment, by Sector*

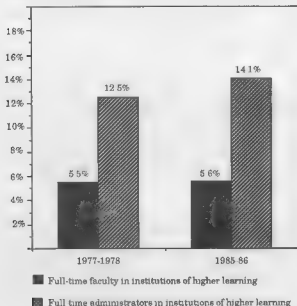
Sources: U.S. Department of Education, *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Data on Earned Degrees Conferred from Institutions of Higher Education by Race Ethnicity 1975-76*; U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1983-84*, p. 121; U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, *Degrees Conferred Surveys, 1985*

Between 1980 and 2000, the number of New Jerseyans in the 15-24 age range will decrease by more than 20 percent. The nonwhite population will increase by 87 percent. While nonwhites constituted about 14 percent of New Jersey's population in 1980, by the year 2000 over 23 percent will be in this category. It is therefore projected that nonwhite adults will be 26 percent of this 15-24 age group.

Most of these black youths will receive their elementary and secondary education in the state's most distressed school districts. Currently, about two thirds of black students attend schools in A and B school districts, those classified by the New Jersey Department of Education as the most disadvantaged due to socio-economic conditions and other factors. (The majority of these students are, in turn, further concentrated in urban A and B districts.) Lacking the wherewithal to escape to private schools or more affluent surroundings, many tend to fall behind beginning in the earliest grades, and are thus denied a fair opportunity to realize their true educational potential.

Minority enrollments in colleges in New Jersey (as elsewhere) rose in the sixties and seventies, only to decline again—long before parity was attained—in the early 1980s. The decline was primarily due to decreasing participating by black students. According to the Census, the number of blacks aged 18 to 24 enrolling in college fell from 33 percent in 1976 to 25 percent in 1985.

Based on these projections it seems clear that the progress of our state will depend on the success of this growing non-white population. However, as the data suggest college enrollment at New Jersey colleges has been declining steadily, despite fairly stable numbers of black high school graduates. Explanations abound as to the reasons for these patterns. While these may be plausible explanations, in fact, the efforts to reverse these declines in minority enrollments have met with



* Excludes UMDNJ in both years, because this 1985-86 data are not comparable to their data for previous years. Including UMDNJ in 1985-1986 raises the overall proportions of women and blacks (to 50.8% and 19.6% respectively) and lowers slightly that of Hispanics (to 4.3%). This pattern obtains for each employment category, with the exception of faculty, where inclusion of UMDNJ lowers the proportions of women and blacks, and administrators, where it raises the proportion of Hispanics.

* The employment categories are defined according to the principal activity of employees. **Administrators** have major responsibility for the management of the institution or of a customarily recognized department or division. **Faculty** conduct instruction, research, or public service as a principle activity and hold academic rank titles.

limited success. Also, minority enrollment in recent years is declining at a faster rate than total undergraduate full-time enrollments.

Recent literature is filled with discussions on the seriousness of perpetuating a system that fails to empower some groups of a society—namely blacks and other minorities, who are projected to become an increasingly significant group within the nation. Peter Smith (1986) states that “with the declining traditional student population, there is a steadily increasing cohort of young people whom we historically have failed in our schools, who have been failed by the institution of public education.” Bud Hodgkinson writes that the “two tiered society won’t be able to support us in the style to that we have become accustomed.” A permanent underclass is being developed to the detriment of the nation.

It is not prophetic but rather conclusive that New Jersey colleges and universities must make strides in the next decade in attracting, retaining, and graduating more minority students to ensure the state’s place in a technological era.

Figure 10 *Black Full-Time Employment in New Jersey Public Colleges and Universities by Employment Category*

Source: Annual Report on Higher Education in New Jersey, 1985-86

Table 15. *Total Degrees Conferred in New Jersey Colleges and Universities, By Sex and by Ethnicity*

	F. Y. 1977-78		F.Y. 1984-85		F. Y. 1985-86		% Change	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	1-year	8-year
Men	23,599	50	20,095	46	19,909	46	-0.9	-15.6
Women	23,428	50	23,559	54	23,093	54	-2.0	1.4
Black	3,400	7	2,937	7	2,966	7	1.0	-12.8
Hispanic	1,149	3	1,623	4	1,639	4	1.0	42.6
White/Other	42,478	90	39,094	89	38,397	89	-1.8	-9.6
Total	47,027	100	43,654	100	43,002	100	-1.5	-8.6

Source: Annual Report on Higher Education in New Jersey, 1986-1987

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New Jersey's Education Agenda and the Problems of Urban Schools

In his "Annual Message to the New Jersey State Legislature," delivered on January 12, 1988, Governor Thomas Kean indicated that:

We are falling behind. We must summon every bit of energy and imagination to improve our schools. If we do not better educate the next generation of Americans, we will not compete in the world economy. It is as simple as that.

Throughout his years in office, this New Jersey governor has chosen to give special attention to improving the quality of education available to the young people of this state. An imposing array of education reforms has been initiated by the Kean administration. Many of these reforms have been received by the state's citizens as long overdue; others have generated considerable public controversy.

Almost every aspect of the education process has received some attention, and different educational environments have been acknowledged as requiring different policy responses. Urban, rural, and suburban schools operate under conditions that, in most instances, are not comparable. Successful efforts to assist them, therefore, must differ. While disagreements surround the particulars of given policy responses to the needs of one environment or another, there is a consensus that this administration treats public education improvement as an important component of its policy agenda.

But if Governor Kean's comment about the need to improve schooling statewide rings true, the conditions in urban schools represent the problem at its worst. Many urban education advocates believe the thrust of the Kean initiatives in this area, although well intentioned, has been far from effective. They view the central element of urban education improvement—the provision of substantially more resources—as missing from the administration's urban strategy and the reason for its lack of success. Although state-supported programs in remedial education, dropout reduction, English as a second language, social counseling, and after-graduation job guarantees offer valuable services to urban students they fall considerably short of what the crisis in urban education requires.

The Governor's most visible educational initiative, his proposal to intervene in failing school districts and to reshape the education program they offer, is considered in some circles to embody more form than substance. This view is grounded in the belief that the politics of implementing a school district take-over are likely to be so disruptive

Richard W. Roper

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of the education process as to overwhelm any possible benefits a take over might produce. Even so, many urban parents are of the opinion that anything that offers the slightest hint of improving education should be given the chance to do so.

The willingness of the Kean administration to use state power to affect change in inner-city schools, despite disagreements about probable outcomes, is thought to be an important expression of state responsibility in the area of public education. This acknowledgement of responsibility does not extend, however, to the area many think most important in the effort to turn around failing public schools—the resources area.

Since 1973, New Jersey has struggled with the issue of educational funding inequities. School finance reform mandated by the state Supreme Court that year, which led to the enactment of a state personal income tax in 1976, has been under legal attack since 1985 as inequities of the past have been permitted to creep back into the system. Today, the debate continues as we await the decision of an administrative law judge in the matter of *Abbott v. Burke*. This case raises once again the controversial issue of the link between education quality and expenditures per pupil. On one side of the issue stands the state of New Jersey which says the link is questionable and on the other side stands seven urban school districts which maintain that inadequate resources prevent them from providing the quality of education available in wealthy suburban school districts.

Reasonable people might conclude that an educational expenditure of \$12,719 in one New Jersey school district and \$2,269 in another would produce markedly different results in education quality. It might also be concluded that real inequities exist if one tenth of the school districts in the state spend less than three-quarters of the state average per pupil while about one-fifth of the districts spend more than 125 percent of the state average amount per pupil. Despite some exceptions, school districts with high dropout rates and low student performance are school districts with low resources and low expenditure levels. Of 19 school districts cited by the Department of Education as having been uncertified for more than two years by 1986-87, 16 had below average budget levels. Invariably, the districts with the fewest resources are urban or rural and the districts with the most resources are suburban.

In his 1989 fiscal year budget, Governor Kean has recommended a \$310 million increase in state aid to education. If approved, the increase would bring total state education spending to \$3.5 billion. Since taking office, the Kean administration has invested approximately \$1.6 billion in additional aid for K-12 education. Yet, few of these funds have been targeted at the problems of urban schools. Although the resources are available to begin correcting the fiscal imbalance between urban and suburban school districts, the political will to do this remains lacking. The 1989 budget proposal does include funds to offer bonuses to inner city school teachers. Providing a \$2,000 bonus to inner city teachers after their first year on the job and another \$2,000 after the third year may help attract and keep good teachers and is a concept

worthy of support; it is, nevertheless, far short of the kind of assistance urban school systems need.

Proposals now being developed by the State and Local Expenditure and Revenue Policy (SLERP) Commission represent a more useful state assistance plan for fiscally strapped urban school districts. The Commission's education subcommittee has recommended an education finance reform package that includes payment of equalization aid as a percentage of the *current* year's budget instead of being based on last year's spending level, requiring school districts that fail to meet specified standards of performance to spend at least the average per-pupil spending of districts meeting the standards, calculating Compensatory Aid by counting each element of the testing program on which a pupil is deficient and providing an adequate additional cost factor for each element; and, funding debt service, as in the case of state equalization aid, on a current year basis.

These proposals will provide poor school districts with badly needed financial resources. They will permit the lowest-resource districts to budget closer to the state's average level. The SLERP Commissioners are aware that experts disagree about the effects of spending on educational performance. They are convinced, however, that we will not see educational improvements unless we reduce school spending disparities. Their conclusion is compelling.

1988 Budget Notes—Higher Education

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In presenting the State of the State and the 1989 Budget Message, Governor Thomas H. Kean made clear his goal of, "not only to have the best colleges and universities but ones that are accessible to all students." The \$53 million increase proposed by the Governor brings the Higher Education Budget to almost \$1 billion, which is 8.1 percent of the total expenditures proposed.

Among the significant increases proposed by the Governor are \$19.7 million for the Excellence Initiative; \$10.611 million for student financial aid; \$10.545 million for aid to independent colleges and universities; \$8.047 million for aid to county colleges, and \$1.0 million for humanities programs.

In the FY '89 Governor's Budget Message and Taxpayer's Guide, the Department of Higher Education noted the following areas in which it will concentrate its energies in the next five years:

- Improving undergraduate education
- Increasing minority involvement in higher education
- Strengthening the college faculty
- Insuring college affordability
- Increasing higher education's contribution to New Jersey's economic development.

Among the FY '89 Budget recommendations designed to strengthen and expand programs that are targeted to minority and urban areas are:

- \$600,000 for continuing support of the pre-college remedial programs for students entering college with severe academic deficiencies and academic preparation.
- An increase of \$590,000, bringing the appropriation to \$2.3 million for the pre-college academic Program. This program is designed to provide support programs for academic enrichment and experiences that motivate students to attend college. Participation is limited to minority and disadvantaged students from urban areas. Additional funding will make this program available to approximately 300 more students.
- \$500,000 is recommended for the Ethnolinguistic Program, an increase of \$300,000 from the previous

year. These monies are to be used to establish model programs focusing on language and critical thinking skills to retain ethnolinguistic minority students and to better prepare them to be competitive in today's market.

- An increase of \$812,000 is recommended for the Minority Academic Careers Program. With this increase, the appropriation would be \$1.2 million for this purpose. This program provides grants and loans for minority faculty in New Jersey colleges and universities who desire to pursue their doctorate degree.

- An additional \$700,000 is recommended for the Retention Initiative. This program is one of many Board of Higher Education programs to improve student's persistence towards graduation. Competitive grant awards are made to institutions to improve and reshape the freshman year academic experience. This increase will bring the total commitment to this area to \$1 million.

- \$250,000 is recommended for the Newark Urban Initiative. This program was begun in FY '86 with state support of \$400,000. These funds will be used to establish a competitive plan for the development of the University Heights area. The monies in FY '89 will be utilized to expand upon several of the programs presented in the plan.

It should be noted that the Department of Higher Education's request for urban initiative programs totalled \$2.32 million which would have provided an additional \$1.07 million in funding for the Newark Program and created urban initiatives in other communities across the state.

In the area of student financial aid, it is recommended that \$87.7 million be provided for FY '89. Among the programs recommended are:

- A new initiative of \$500,000 for part-time tuition aid grant awards is recommended for FY '89. This program will allow approximately 800 students, who heretofore were ineligible for assistance, to receive aid. The program is to be targeted to minority and disadvantaged students.

- \$500,000 is recommended in FY '89 to begin an Urban Scholars Program. This program will provide students with a \$1000 award for enrollment in a New Jersey college or university. The program is patterned after the Distinguished Scholar's Program. Eligible candidates must come from an urban school district.

- \$2.1 million additional support is recom-

mended for the Educational Opportunity Fund. Monies will be used for increases in grant award levels and expansion of both summer renewal programs and services.

The Governor's recommendation for a \$350 million Jobs, Education, and Competitiveness Bond Act for 1989 is to be placed before the voters on the November 1988 ballot. These monies will be used to close the infrastructure gap at our colleges and universities. Specifically, these funds will be utilized to build libraries, laboratories and science centers throughout the state. It is anticipated that the Bond Issue could generate as much as \$415 million for capital projects. Of this amount, over \$29 million could be available with the application of the State's Minority Business Set-Aside provisions.

Reference

Source. *Fiscal Year 1988-1989 New Jersey Budget Message and Taxpayer's Guide* (Trenton, N.J.: State of New Jersey, Thomas H. Kean, Governor, February 2, 1988).

Some Final Thoughts

The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few—or the one—is a philosophy recently resurrected and espoused by First Officer Spock of the fictitious Starship Enterprise as he gave his life to save his ship and its crew. It is a philosophy that may derive from the works of an English jurist/philosopher, Jeremy Benton, who as early as the mid eighteenth century said, “The greatest good to the greatest number is the measure of right and wrong.” It seems also to be a philosophy embraced by Joe Clark, principal, East Side High School, Paterson, N.J., as evidenced by both his words and his actions in their demand for the removal of a minority element within classrooms under his supervision that disrupts the educational environment and makes it impossible for the many who wish to learn there.

At least in the context in which it is espoused by Principal Clark, the Bentonian/Spockian philosophy appears to be extremely popular within the mainstream of American society as well as within the highest offices of government in this nation. It is a philosophy with tremendous *prima facie* appeal in its promise to create a more perfect society, one that is safer, more educated and more productive.

The “Bentonian” philosophy is summarized here for those parents who, having read the preceding articles, still believe and accept, either through ignorance of the truth or through benign abdication of their parental responsibilities, that the educational interests of their children—the few or the one—are being adequately attended to through the moral or legal duty of others. The following brief summary of the law combined with the information contained in the preceding pages of this Report should enlighten many.

There is no inalienable right to an education within the protections of the United States Constitution.

Education, of course, is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution. Nor do we find any basis for saying it is implicitly so protected. As we have said, the undisputed importance of education will not alone cause this court to depart from the usual standard for reviewing a state's social and economic legislation. *San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez*, U.S. Supreme Court, 411 US 36 (1973).

Education is not a *fundamental right*; a state need not justify by compelling necessity every variation in the manner in which education is provided to its

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population. *Plyler v. Doe*, U.S. Supreme Court, 457 US 202 (1978).

The Federal Constitution has been relied upon primarily to recognize the importance of public education and to demand that it be offered on an equal basis, within a particular state system, to various segments of the school-age population. (See *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954); see also *Craig v. Bonen* 429 US 190 (1976).

Since education is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under the Federal Constitution, an individual student is afforded little federal "due process" protection against the taking away of this "right".

"As a matter of due process, students facing suspension, . . . must, at the very minimum, be given some kind of notice, and afforded some kind of hearing, by the school authorities." *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 US 565 (emphasis added).

Not only have the *Goss* due process protections subsequently been interpreted as minimal, they have also been interpreted as applying primarily to dismissal for disciplinary reasons and not for academic failure.

All that *Goss* required is an informal give-and-take between the student and the administrative body dismissing him that would, at least, give the student the opportunity to characterize his conduct and put it in what he deems the proper context." *Board of Curators, Univ. of Mo. v. Horowitz*, 435 US 78 (1978).

. . . significant difference between the failure of a student to meet academic standards and the violation by a student of valid rules of conduct. This difference calls for far less stringent procedural requirements in the case of an academic dismissal." *Ibid.* at 86.

The principal protectors of any rights to a public education are, therefore, the governing bodies of the 50 states; and among these states, New Jersey has ostensibly taken this responsibility very seriously.

The [State] Constitution places ultimate responsibility on the state for [a] thorough and efficient education system." *Robinson, et al v. Cahill, et al* 62 NJ (1973).

New Jersey, like most other states, has delegated this ultimate responsibility to local government through school districts. The state remains ultimately responsible, however.

If local government fails to maintain and support [a] thorough and efficient system of free public schools, the state government must compel it to act, and if the local government cannot carry the burden, the state must itself meet its continuing obligation. *Ibid.*, at 477.

Common to virtually all references to the obligation of this state to provide its youth with a "thorough and efficient" education is a reference to the word "system"—the context in which the needs of "the many" are attended to. The findings in the preceding article entitled, *Still Separate and Still Unequal: The Status of Black Students in Special Education in New Jersey*, as it relates to a particular minority segment of the school population, are not surprising. Nor should we be surprised to find that the state's vocational schools are too often misused as alternative education systems for difficult students rather than as institutions in which to pursue meaningful and viable educational options—not unlike the pursuit of a college preparatory curriculum.

As Clifford Gregory Stewart's article points out, the "system" mandated by law and designed to attend to the needs of the many is not even broad enough to reach one sizable minority known as urban school children. The implications of this revelation are significant both for the black population in this state, 75% of which live in urban areas, and for the state itself, given the data set forth in the article by Kwaku Armah and Claudette Smith suggesting that between 1980 and the year 2000 the non-white population in New Jersey will increase by 87%; the percentage of non-white in the overall population of New Jersey will increase from 14% to 23%; and non-white adults will be 26% of the total New Jersey population age 15-24. (See Armah and Smith, p. 103).

Whether through invidious discrimination, benign neglect or conscious application of the Bentonian philosophy, urban school children, who are predominantly Black and Hispanic, are not being afforded "that educational opportunity which is needed in the contemporary setting to equip a child for his role as a citizen and as [a] competitor in the labor market" (*Robinson v. Cahill* at 477). That this critical test for a thorough and efficient educational system is being revisited in the case of *Abbott v. Burke*, 100 NJ 473 (1985) is significant both because it highlights the failure of the system for urban youth and because it is an action of parents on behalf of their own children. It is hoped that these and other similarly situated parents will adopt an even more extensive role in the assurance of a quality education for their particular children. This should include traditional efforts such as participation in parent/teacher associations; frequent communications with teachers; attendance at meetings of the Board of Education; participation in the election of School Board members; review of school budgets; review of school work with the child; supplementing the academic curricula with sound familial and other traditional values; and simply being a visible and vocal participant in the formulation of policies affecting their children's lives.

It is understandable that any system of policies and rules will generally attend to the needs of the majority of participants within that system. In an arena as important as education, it is incumbent upon individual parents to assure that their children—the "few or the one"—are afforded a reasonable opportunity to be equipped for his/her role as a citizen and as a competitor in the increasingly demanding labor market.

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